

John H.
THE
PARABLE
OF THE
TEN VIRGINS
OPENED AND APPLIED:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF
DIVERS SERMONS

ON MATTH. XXV. 1—14.

WHEREIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SINCERE CHRIS-
TIAN AND THE MOST REFINED HYPOCRITE, THE NA-
TURE AND CHARACTERS OF SAVING AND OF COM-
MON GRACE, THE DANGERS AND DISEASES IN-
CIDENT TO MOST FLOURISHING CHURCH-
ES OR CHRISTIANS, AND OTHER SPI-
RITUAL TRUTHS OF GREATEST
IMPORTANCE, ARE CLEAR-
LY DISCOVERED, AND
PRACTICALLY IM-
PROVED.

BY
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Luke xxi. 36.—*Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted
worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the
Son of man.*

VOL. I.

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TO THE READER.

THAT to make sure of life eternal, is the one necessary business, that we sons of death have to do in this world, and without which, all our time here is worse than lost, every enlightened mind will easily acknowledge. This present life being by the rule of it, appointed but to this end, to be preparation-time, spent in a continual care to make ready, that we might have a good meeting with him who shall be seen in this air one day. And whether we look up to heaven, or down to hell; whether we reflect upon our own immortal souls, or turn our eyes toward the greatness and goodness of that God in Christ with whom we have to do; whether we pace over the time between this and judgment day, or send our thoughts to view the eternity that is to follow after. All things put a necessity, a solemnity, a glory upon this work.

But *difficilia quae pulchra*: It is one of the oracles uttered by our Lord with his own mouth, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' It is not so easy a thing to get to heaven, nor so broad a way thither, as the slight and loose opinions of some, and practices of more would make it, nor as the carnal hearts of all would have it. Though that (if it be examined) is the common scope of all erroneous conceits (and how restlessly have the corrupt minds of men laboured therein in all ages, and do in these our days) to widen the way to life, to break down the boundaries of this narrow path, and make it broader than ever God made it. Man's carnal heart finds itself pinioned and straitened in the way (the good old way of effectual faith and obedience) that God has laid out; hence it breaks out on this hand and on that, and will rather pluck up the ancient land-marks of God's truth, than not make it broader. The gospel will not afford men a way broad enough, unless the law be quite removed (not only as a covenant, but as a commanding rule of life too) and laid

flat like an old hedge, that they may go over it at pleasure, and not attend it any further than their spirit listeth. Justification by faith is too narrow a path, unless they may be justified before and without faith, it is not free enough; they complain of it as if it laid them under a covenant of works. Conditional promises are of too straight a size, they must be all absolute, and give us peace without any qualification in us, or else they are not large enough. To be solicitous about sanctification and inherent grace, is too troublesome; to seek God diligently in the use of all means, in a daily and hearty performance of holy duties, in a strict sanctifying of sabbaths, in constant watchfulness, &c. this must be laid by, as a legal business. And if the spirit immediately will act us and carry us in a bed of ease to heaven, without troubling us to act and strive, well and good; otherwise men will shake hands with the power of godliness, and run adrift before their own corruptions. But when all stones are turned, the way to heaven is and will be found to be a straight way: truth has said, it is so; and it is not all the notions of men that will make it otherwise. And hence those solemn counsels of the scripture, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, give all diligence to make all sure, strive to enter in at the strait gate, so run that you may obtain,' &c. though they be little attended by the looseness of these times, yet they are of endless moment and use, and had need be awfully regarded by all that love their everlasting peace.

He therefore that is in earnest about this great business, will be glad of any good help to guide him in this way, this straight way to life. And though there be many choice helps herein already extant, in the precious labours of sundry of the Lord's faithful servants, for which this age has cause on bended knees to bless the Lord, and which will be such a testimony against the wantonness thereof, as it will never be able to answer: yet of those that do clearly, particularly, lively and searchingly discover and mark out this straight way, with the several practical turns thereof, and shew where they that miss of the end at last, do turn out of it, although they go far therein; of those that pilot us, when we come into the narrow channel, unto the very point of entrance into life, and shew us the rocks and shoals on either hand distinctly; of these (I say) there is not too great a number. For to speak any good and useful truths,

is good and commendable; but yet it is another and a further matter to hold the candle to the poor people of God (even to the meanest) to light them to heaven, or to take the soul by the hand, and lead it from step to step through all the difficulties, deceits and turnings at which the closest hypocrites do miss their way and lose themselves; and to do this so convincingly, thoroughly and distinctly, as that the secrets of hearts may be made manifest, the secure self-deceiver discovered and awakened, and yet the humble upright christian confirmed and encouraged.

In this skill and work, as the author of the following sermons, was known to be among the first three; so these lectures of his, upon the Parable of the Virgins, have been esteemed to excel in this kind; having left such a relish upon the hearers, as that they have not forgotten the taste of them to this day. It has therefore been the instant desire of many that heard them, and of some that have but heard of them that they might be imparted to the public. And surely, both the subject and the manner of handling it is such, being wholly upon those things wherein the heart and life of religion lies, that we cannot disapprove of their opinions, who have so earnestly desired it. All the sermons and books that speak to the heart of religion are little enough to feed that, and keep life there, especially in this languishing and dying age; wherein though there wants not common light and outward profession, yet loss of love and inward deadness are as common. The work being somewhat lengthy: and fitting scribes not easily attainable in this wilderness, it has occasioned this delay hitherto. But we hope it will now be neither unacceptable nor unseasonable.

These sermons are now transcribed by industrious and intelligent persons, and have been carefully reviewed and corrected. They are written out of the author's own notes, which he prepared for preaching (only about a sheet himself wrote out in his life-time, having thoughts it seems of yielding to their desires who were earnest for their publishing) by means whereof, though the reader will often meet with curtness of expression, and though some lively passages that were uttered in preaching may be wanting, yet you will have this benefit to have much in little room. It may also easily be observed, that not curiosity of words, but weight of things was here studied by, and flowed from the heart and pen of the author, which yet produceth the best and truest,

is a real rhetoric. In sum, although many imperfections incident to such posthumous editions cannot be wanting, yet we doubt not but the work will speak for itself, to the intelligent and serious reader.

We are not ignorant that there be some who somewhat differ from this our author in accommodation of this parable, and analysis of some part of the context, referring it to the times about the expected calling of the Jews (and if so, the substance of the work may be accounted to be in a more than ordinary manner proper and seasonable for these times) but therein every man is left free to his own further disquisitions. Neither is it for the sake of the bare exposition (much less chronical accommodation) of the text so much, that we publish these things (in that kind the labours of others do abound) but for the spiritual, practical, lively, soul-searching truths and applications thereof that are therein contained, the substance of which truths the impartial reader will easily acknowledge to be clear both from this and from other scriptures.

These sermons preached by the author, in a weekly lecture, were begun in June 1636, and ended in May 1640. In which time there was a leaven of Antinomian and Familistical opinions stirring in the country, as the world has already in print been informed: by occasion whereof the reader will meet with sundry passages tending to reprove and refute some of those conceits, and to establish the contrary truth; which we have not expunged, but let them pass mostly as we found them; seeing it is no more than the world already knows, that there were such things then among us; and though that storm be (as to its open influence) comfortably blown over with us, yet the like errors are (if not latent among some here) spread elsewhere by the new lights of these times, whence these helps against them are still needful. And we doubt not but the substance of the truth here defended by our author will stand and abide the trial. Yea, I suppose I may freely take liberty to say, that among the many excellencies wherewith the Lord endowed this precious instrument of his, this was none of the least, that God taught him, and helped him to teach others the true middle way of the gospel between the Legalist on the one hand, and the Antinomian (or loose gospeller) on the other, with much and sweet clearness, as was evident in the whole course and way of his preaching, and may in some measure appear both in his
books

books formerly printed, and in the following sermons. Other passages also of special application to this country, and to those first times of it, we willingly permit to pass the press, because they may be profitable to others in like cases elsewhere, and of special benefit to the New-English reader. For why should we not desire and hope that the suitable solemn counsels and warnings here given to these churches by this seer in Israel, in reference to the main matters of life and godliness may now be of living, awakening and soul instructing use to them (Oh that it may be!) unto many generations!

Reader, if thou comest hither to carp and cavil, or to criticize upon each circumstantial imperfection, this work is not for thy turn; but if thou bringest with thee a serious and humble heart, desirous to have thy soul searched to the quick, the sores thereof lanced, thy spiritual work and way directed, and the interest of thy eternal peace furthered; if thou desirest to walk with God in good earnest, and escaping all the snares of a slight and slumbering generation, to stand before the Son of man with comfort in the day of his glory, then mayest thou here find that that will suit thee, and which thou wilt bless the Lord for, even words that are as goads and nails fastened by this master of assemblies; given from that one and chief Shepherd. The Lord fix and fasten them in all our hearts, that abiding and being engrafted there, they may be instrumental to further our salvation, that neither deficiency in the main, nor sloathful security, may hinder us from our desired end; but when that chief Shepherd and that heavenly Bridegroom, who now sends to us by so many servants and messages of his, both in word and writing shall appear himself 'in the glory of his Father, and of all his holy angels,' we also may 'receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away,' and (for the last consummation of this happy marriage) may go home with him to his Father's house, there to abide in his rest, in the 'fulness of his joy,' and drink down his 'pleasures for evermore.'

And you that sometimes were the flock of this shepherd, and have heard these things from the lively voice of this soul-melting preacher, whom you never can forget; let it be a welcome providence to have these truths thus revived to you, and put into your hands, that he who is dead, may yet speak to you and yours. Get them into your houses to read, nay, into your hearts to feed upon, as a choice and precious treasure. And let them still be a living and continual
warning

warning to you to watch and keep alive the power of godliness, the daily practice of working 'out your salvation with 'fear and trembling,' the love of the truth, the hatred of every false way, the esteem and improvement of God's ordinances, and the true, humble, heavenly life of faith in Christ Jesus.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

TO THE READER.

IF thou art one who knowest what it is to be serious in the great business of providing for eternity, it is very probable thou mayest be no stranger to the name of this Reverend author, now with God, whose name in both the Englands is as an ointment poured forth; and then thou wilt be eagerly desirous to peruse these following sermons, in tendency to the further increasing thy stock of spiritual oil; and when thou hast read them, and sucked forth the sweetness and nourishment contained in them, and by the assistance of the holy Spirit turned them into good and healthful nutriment to thy soul, we question not but it will inhanche the author's worth in thy thoughts and estimation. But perhaps thou hast never lighted on any of those flowers which this holy man has planted in God's garden, and then we are confident thou wilt meet with such savoury sweetness in this discourse, as will make thee wish Christ's church had longer enjoyed so choice and skilful a workman. If thou be one who hast hitherto little considered of God and thy soul, and the concerns of eternity, or only now and then had some morning dew thoughts of that which deserves and requires the choicest and most vigorous workings of thy soul, we wish thou wouldst so far comply with God's goodness in bringing this book to thy hand, and gratify thyself, (we mean thy soul, thy better self,) as to read over this treatise, in which thou wilt meet with those serious and soul-piercing truths, which by God's blessing may be as poison to thy lusts, and awaken thee to a serious and hearty engaging in that work which none ever yet repented of. For the occasion of publishing this piece, we refer thee to the larger epistle of our reverend brother, and only add, that though a vein of serious, solid and hearty piety run through all this author's works, yet he has reserved the best wine till the last. The Lord help thee and us so to read and improve these and such like labours of God's

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harvest-men, that we may with the wise virgins have the lamps of our souls trimmed and furnished with oil, that when the Bridegroom shall come, we may be ready to enter with him into his kingdom. Which is and shall be the prayer of us, who are hearty well-wishers to thy soul.

WILLIAM GREENHILL,
EDMUND CALAMY,
JOHN JACKSON,
SIMON ASH,
WILLIAM TAYLOR.

December 24, 1659.

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THE
PARABLE
OF THE
TEN VIRGINS
UNFOLDED.

CHAP. I. SECT. I.

MATTH. XXV. 1—14.

1. *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*
--2. *And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*---
3. *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them.*---4. *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*---5. *While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.*---6. *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.*---7. *Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.*---8. *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.*---9. *But the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*---10. *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.*---11. *Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, lord, open to us.*---12. *But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*---13. *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

THESE words are part of our Saviour's answer unto two solemn questions which his disciples propounded unto him, ch. xxiv. ver. 3. The first was concerning the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem. The second concerning the sign of his coming,

and so of the end of the world. The first seems to be occasioned by our Saviour's speech, ch. xxiv. ver. 2. The second from his speech, ch. xxiii. ver. 39. To the first therefore he answers, from the 4th verse of the xxivth chap. to the 23d ver. of it. To the second he answereth from the 23d ver. of the same chap. to the end of this xxvth chap. Wherein he acquaints them,

1. With some things which shall be before his coming, viz. subtle and strong delusions, mixt with sore tribulations and oppressions, especially in the time of Antichrist's reign, as also great confusions, in all hearts and churches, if not throughout all the world, after the tribulation of those days; and then (saith he) ver. 30. 'shall appear the sign of the Son of man,' and he shall be seen 'coming in power and great glory;' but if you desire farther to know the day and hour when this shall be, it is such a secret as my Father revealeth not to any, no, not to the very angels in heaven, and therefore you need not know it, nor yet should seek to know it; it is sufficient for you to know that before my coming there shall be lamentable and sad times, and that when they are at their worst, that the sun and the moon (through the horrors of men's hearts, and the universal confusions in the world) shall seem to be darkened, &c. that then it is time for me to come, and set all in order again, then the time of my coming draws nigh: Now this Christ doth from ver. 23. of the xxivth chap. to ver. 37.

2. Having thus spoken concerning his coming, he breaks off his speech in describing his coming, and falls to discovering the state of the times toward, and about the days of his coming, and this he doth from chap. xxiv. ver. 37. to chap. xxv. ver. 31. by the consideration of which he persuades to watchfulness against his coming. 1. Either (saith he) the times will be very sensual and degenerate, as in the days of Noah, in some places of the world, chap. xxiv. ver. 38. which he illustrates from two parables, persuading therefore to watchfulness

watchfulness, to the end of chap. xxiv. 2. Or there will be great security in other places, and among other persons (not given up to sensuality as in the days of Noah,) but who are the chaste, virgin, pure churches of the world, not defiled with the whoredoms in the world; and this our Saviour unfolds in this parable. 3. Or if any be awakened (as some shall) to look for Christ's coming, yet among these, some through hard conceits of the Lord Jesus, shall be wilfully careless, and not improve their talents for the sake and use of the Lord Jesus, and this is set down in the next parable of the ten talents, from ver. 14. to ver. 31. You see therefore where this parable stands, and to what purpose it is brought in. In which are two things.

S E C T. II.

1. **T**HE Parable itself, concerning the ten Virgins, from verse 1. to verse 13.

2. The scope of the parable, ver. 13. which is to persuade not simply to watchfulness, but to continuance and perseverance in it from a prudent foresight of the coming of Christ.

1. The parable itself is set down, agreeable to the custom of those times wherein our Saviour lived, wherein their marriages were usually celebrated in the night-time, she that was the bride was attended with sundry virgins to meet the bridegroom; these virgins (it being night season) took therefore their lamps with them; those that were ready, and met the bridegroom, were admitted to the marriage-room and supper; those that came after that time, if once the doors were shut, were surely kept out, though they knocked hard to come in. All this, those who are acquainted with Jewish histories and customs know to be true, which we are to attend, because it gives not
a little

a little light to the true and genuine explication of this parable.

In which parable note these two parts.

1. The churches preparation to meet with Christ, called here the bridegroom, from the 1st to the 5th ver.
2. The bridegroom's coming forth to meet them, from the 5th to the 12th ver.

S E C T. III.

The first part of the Parable.

FIRST, I shall speak of the preparation made by the church to meet with Christ Jesus. Wherein also note these three things.

1. The place where this preparation is made, viz. in the "kingdom of heaven," ver. 1.
2. The time when it shall be made, set down in the first word, "Then," ver. 1.
3. The persons that shall make this preparation, they shall not be corrupted members of degenerate churches, where mens profession is grown foul through length of wearing; but they are professors of some eminent strain, some whereof are truly sincere, others secretly unsound. And there is a double description of them. 1. From some things wherein they all agree. 2. From some other particulars wherein they manifestly differ;

First, Those things wherein they all agree are three.

1. They are all virgins, virgin professors.
2. They were all awake and watchful for some time, ready to meet the bridegroom, and hence it is said, "They took their lamps."
3. They all had so much faith as to go out to meet the bridegroom.

Secondly, Those things wherein they did differ, are,

1. Generally, "five were wise," and "five were foolish," ver. 2.
2. Spe-

2. Specially, the foolish took lamps, but no oil ; the wise did both, ver. 3. 4.

This is the rude draught of the first part of the parable, the sum whereof is this, That the state of the members of some churches about the time of Christ's coming, shall be this, they shall not be openly profane, corrupt, and scandalous, but virgin-professors, awakened (for some season) out of carnal security, stirring, lively Christians, not preserving their chastity and purity merely in a way of works, but waiting for Christ in a covenant of grace, only some of these, and a good part of these, shall be indeed wise, stored with spiritual wisdom, filled with the power of grace ; but others of them, and a great part of them too, shall be found foolish at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

I come therefore to handle the first particular in this first part, viz.

CHAP. II. SECT. I.

Of the Visible Church of God.

1. **T**HE place where this preparation to meet Christ shall be made, and that is not in the kingdoms of this world (earthly kingdoms) but in the kingdom of heaven, and therefore it is said, " The kingdom of heaven shall be like," &c.

I will not trouble you with telling you how many ways the kingdom of heaven is taken in scripture ; by kingdom of heaven here, is not meant the kingdom of glory in the third heaven ; for there shall be no foolish virgins at all there, no unclean thing shall enter thither ; nor by it is meant the head of this kingdom, viz. Christ Jesus ; for how can he be like to ten virgins ? nor by it is meant the gospel of the kingdom (which Matt. xiii. is called the " kingdom of heaven," and compared to a draw-net) for how can it be

be like unto ten virgins? nor yet the internal kingdom of grace kept up in the heart of every believer (which is called a grain of mustard seed; Matt. xiii.) for how can any foolish virgins be there? or what share have they in that? Therefore I conceive it is clear, that by the kingdom of heaven here, is meant the external kingdom of Christ in this world: that is, the visible church, or the estate of the visible church, which is frequently called in scripture, "the kingdom of heaven," as Matt. viii. 12. and xxi. 43. In which kingdom some are wise, some foolish, all profess Christ, look for the coming of Christ, for salvation from Christ; the estate of this visible church shall be like ten virgins.

S E C T. II.

AND hence I shall note this one thing.

Doct. 1. That the visible church of God on earth, especially in the times of the gospel, is the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

For look upon the face of the whole earth, there you may see the kingdoms of men, and the kingdom of Satan, sin and death, which the apostle saith, Rom. v. reigneth over all men; here is only the kingdom of heaven upon earth, viz. in the visible church; it is not the place only which makes either heaven or hell, (though there is a place for both) but the state principally makes both, one may be in hell upon earth, as Christ was in his bitter agony; and a man may be in a kind of heaven upon earth, as Christ tells his hearers, that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand;" a man may be under the kingdom of Satan and darkness upon earth, Col. i. 13. which is a kind of hell, and why not as well under the kingdom of God on earth, which is a kind of heaven, especially, I say, now under the gospel, wherein the Lord hath begun to fulfil, that which was but only promised under the
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Old Testament to be fulfilled in the fourth and last monarchy, (Dan. ii. 44.) in the time of the New: In the state of Christ's visible church, which should by little and little beat down all other kingdoms of the world.

S E C T. III.

Reas. 1. BEcause the same king that is reigning in heaven, is reigning here, is present here, Psal. ii. 6. and here the saints are commanded to rejoice, to shout, and to be glad with all their hearts, because of the presence of this their king among them, Zeph. iii. 14. 15. It is true indeed he is king over all the world; the immediate execution of all God's common, as well as special providence, is put into the hand of this king, the Lord Jesus. But as for his enemies, and other creatures, he reigns over them as a king of power, but he reigns not for them also as a king of grace and love, for thus he reigns among his people in his church, Deut. xxxiii. 26. 27. The Lord is present with every one of his people, severally, but much more jointly, when two or three of them are met together in his name.

Reason 2. Because here are the laws of heaven, Heb. xii. 25. Take heed (speaking of the ministry of the gospel in the churches) that you refuse not to hear him who speaketh from heaven, which laws are not only here promulgated (as they be among the enemies of this kingdom) but accepted and received also, without which laws what kingdom could there be? Christ's kingdom in this world is neither tyrannical, nor arbitrary, to govern without law; no, no, but if he be our king he is our law-giver also, Isa. xxxiii. 22. Nay, the same laws by which we shall be ruled in heaven, we have here, and we are now under: that as our divines say against the papists, though before Moses' time, there was not *scriptio verbi*, yet there was

verbum scriptum, which the patriarchs had before the flood, and afterward until Moses' time: So I say here, though in heaven the external letter and scrip- tion both of law and gospel, shall be abolished, be- cause they need them not when the day star is risen, 2 Pet. i. 19. Yet the living rules of both for sub- stance, shall remain; the end of the ministry is to bring us to the unity of faith in a perfect estate, Eph. iv. 13. Therefore faith shall not cease, when ministers shall, and that perfect man shall come. Our faith indeed shall not then by such glasses see Christ, nor adhere unto Christ, by such means of promises and or- dinances as we do now, but without them we shall both see, and forever adhere to him who is our king at that day; and though indeed the law is now abo- lished, as a covenant of life, yet it shall ever remain as a rule of life; perfect subjection to it, is the hap- piness of saints in heaven, 1 John i. as a heart con- trary to it is the greatest misery of the saints on earth, Rom. vii. 24.

Reason 3. Because here are the subjects of heaven, Eph. ii. 19. Fellow-citizens of the saints, not only on earth, but as Paul speaketh, Phil. iii. 20. "Our con- versation (or, as it may be rendered, our free bur- gess-ship) is in heaven." God himself hath cano- nized all the true members of visible churches with the name of saints, throughout the whole New Testa- ment, here are the great heirs of heaven, nay, pos- sessors of heaven by faith, as others are by feeling, as near and dear to God (in some respect) as those that be in heaven already; because the same motive which makes him love them, makes him love these, though poor abjects, and out-casts of the world; there is but a paper-wall of their bodies between them and hea- ven, only here is the difference, they there, are sub- jects in their own country; these here, are the same countrymen, only strangers for a time here upon earth: Some define a kingdom to be *dominatus regis*

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in populum subiectum. If Christ (the king) was present, and his laws published, but there were no people to be subject to him there could be no kingdom; but when the king, laws, and subjects of heaven are here met together in the visible church, here is now the kingdom of heaven.

Reason 4. Because here is the very glory of heaven begun, that look as the same sun which fills the stars with glory, the very same beams touch the earth also, so the same glory which shines in heaven, shines into the poor church here, 1 Pet. v. 10. God hath called his people into his eternal glory. And Rom. viii. 30. "Whom Christ hath justified, them he hath glorified," *i. e.* he hath begun it here; here in a special manner is the presence of the angels in heaven, Eph. iii. 10. Here the pure in heart see God, and that after another manner, than many times they can in their solitary condition, Psal. lxiii. 1, 2, 3. And what is this but heaven?

S E C T. IV.

Use 1. SEE therefore hence their happiness and honour, whom God hath called out of the world, and planted in his church: What hath the Lord done, but opened the way to the tree of life, and let you into paradise again? Nay, (which is more) what hath he done but taken you up into the very kingdom of heaven itself? where you have the Lord of glory to be your king, the laws of heaven made known, his heart opened, where you have the heirs of heaven your companions, and the angels of heaven your guard, desiring to look into those things, which your eyes see, and your hearts feel, 1 Pet. i. 12. Where you have the love of a Father appearing, the Son of God inhabiting, and the Spirit of heaven comforting. "Lord, what is man that thou art thus mindful of him!" That when the Lord seeth it unmeet to take

you out of this world up unto heaven, that heaven should come down into this world unto you, who were once enemies to this kingdom, shut up under the kingdom of death and darkness, strangers to the common-wealth of Israel, without God and Christ in the world, without promise, without hope. I do not cry the temple of the Lord, nor idolize order and churches, but I tell you what your privilege is, and thereby what God's goodness is: I know the world neither seeth nor feeleth any such heaven on earth, but soon grow despisers secretly of all ordinances, who if they were in heaven itself with their carnal hearts, they would not abide there with much contentment, yet verily heaven hath been, and is found here by God's hidden ones, even such things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and if it be not thus with thee, blame thyself, and mourn the more, who in the midst of light art in utter darkness, and in the place where heaven is begun to some, it should be made a little hell to thee.

Use 2. Take heed of defiling secretly the church of God: For what do you do thereby, but pollute the kingdom of heaven itself? And the better any thing is, the greater is the defilement cast upon it. It is said, 1 Pet. i. 4. that the kingdom of heaven above is "an inheritance undefiled"*; never yet the subject place where any sin was committed, and this is one part of the glory of it. Take you heed of coming into church-fellowship with defiled hearts, and so defiling God's holy things; for do you know where you are? I know it is not in that heaven where you cannot sin, but yet it is in such a heaven where you should not sin, much less defile the church of God. It was one of God's heavy indictments against the church of the Jews, that when the Lord had brought them out of a land of pits, into a plentiful country, yet

* Some think from thence, that the lapsed angels did not fall in the third heaven, but in some place in the earth; for that is an inheritance undefiled.

yet they defiled his land, neither priests nor people said, "Where is the Lord?" Jer. ii. 6, 8. It will be much more heavy another day with you, that walking in the fellowship of God's people, shall be found guilty of defiling the kingdom of heaven itself, which you should be careful to keep as an undefiled inheritance, which defilements, whether spiritual or sensual, as they stain the very glory of heaven itself, so they keep you from feeling the truth of this doctrine, even of this heaven upon earth in your own experience.

Use 3. Let all members of churches hence learn to have their conversation in heaven, and walk as men come down from heaven, and returning thither again, and that as it were already in heaven. Paul did thus, and wept to see so many that did not thus, but did "mind earthly things," Phil. iii. 19, 20. Do not only forsake, but even "forget your country, and your father's house, so shall the King of glory desire your beauty," Psal. xlv. 10, 11. Let the reproach of earthly-mindedness cast upon the face of christians, be wiped off by your carriage, being heavenly, holy, loosened from things below. Art thou in heaven with an earthly heart? Is not heaven good enough for thee? Cannot that content thee which many have desired to see, and could not see, even the Lord Jesus, the King of glory in his beauty, in the assemblies of his saints?

Use 4. Take heed of pulling down this kingdom. Loyal subjects will rather lose their lives, than their prince shall lose his kingdom. Fear not enemies without, but yourselves at home. The enemies of the church, did never yet hurt the church, but the church's sins, Zach. vii. 4. O! consider what mercy the Lord hath trusted us withal, that unless the Lord should carry us to heaven itself, immediately on the wings of angels, he can shew us no greater outward favour, in this world, than to bring us into this his kingdom of heaven on earth. I profess, one day's fellowship

fellowship here with a number of broken-hearted christians, either mourning together, or rejoicing in their God and King together, it out-bids the many years' glory of the whole world, (howsoever it is hidden from the world). And will you betray this kingdom?

S E C T. V.

Quest. *WHAT are those things that may pull down this kingdom?*

Ans. 1. Ignorance of those sins which may hurt and ruin it. There are common infirmities which all the faithful have in common, for the Lord pities his; but there are some that are proper and personal to some particular persons, Psal. xviii. 23. for which the Lord is even angry with his own; so there are some sins which are common church-infirmities, for which the Lord will not cast off his people, but there are sometimes in several churches proper church-sins. Now the rule here is, if these be not seen and lamented and removed, if the Lord be angry for these (as verily he will) and yet they do not so much as know all this while what it is that hurts them, these sins will canker the roots, and blast the most flourishing churches. Ephesus, Rev. i. 4. had her sin; Sardis, Rev. ii. 1. had her sin. Laodicea had her sins, Rev. iii. 16. Now what if they never know these, nor repent of these, you know then Ephesus's candlestick must be removed, and Laodicea must be spued out of Christ's mouth. O! this hath been the bane of churches, while they enjoyed their liberties, they could not, (nay in truth) would not know their all, in the day of Christ's visitation of them, and hence came their ruin, the cause of which they saw not; only it may be the remnant that escaped, to whom the Lord shewed mercy, could read their sins in their plagues. It is a lamentable spectacle to behold the
ruins

ruins of Germany, and that after such great slaughter and effusion of blood, they cannot tell the thing that hath hurt, and doth still waste them.

2. Self-seeking, a spirit of self. Look as it is in a kingdom, if there be a common enemy, and the body of the army which should encounter with them, be every man taken up, and taking thought how he may preserve his own tent, and do not join their forces together for common safety, it must perish, and the kingdom will be easily conquered: Or as it is with the body, if every member seeks to preserve itself alone, and not that which preserves them all, (viz. the head) the body will drop down and die shortly. Christ Jesus is at the head of this body (his church.) Now it is certain if ye seek to preserve your own name more than Christ's, to give more content to your own lusts, then to the will and heart of Christ, if more careful of fetching feathers to your own nests, and to shift for yourselves, and not to attend (every man in his place) the public good of the church, and Christ in it; it is certain God will forsake you, and all will to ruin quickly, 2 Chron. xv. 2, 2.

Church members of public spirits, are ever prosperous men. "They shall prosper that love thee," Psal. cxxii. 6. That say in their hearts out of sense of Christ's love, Lord, what shall I do for thee? How may I be useful to thy people? But if back and belly, mine and thine, be chief in request, this will ruin you.

3. League and amity with the enemies of Christ's kingdom, or peace with our lusts; it is not sin, but a privy peace with sin, and a secret quietness in sin, which overthrows Christ's kingdom: The Canaanites that were left alive, because, it is said, they could not drive them out, how often did they vex, and prick, and yoke the Israel of God? Those sins which you say, you cannot part with, and hence yield to them, and

and mourn not under them, those will ruin churches : Some sins you have forsaken, and could forsake, the danger lies not here, wrath goeth out against Jehosaphat, because he loved him who hated the Lord, 2 Chron. xix. 2.

4. When the church lays bye her weapons. No kingdom can be safe in an ordinary way, where all their weapons are taken from them, or not used by them, when their enemies are upon their borders : When the church hang by, and lay aside faith (the shield whereby we defend ourselves) and prayer (whereby we offend our enemies) what safety is to be expected now in churches : Only be strong, faith the Lord to Joshua, when he went out upon that great service of the Lord, Josh. i. 17. Eph. vi. 13. There is no more fearful sign of ruin to a church, than where the spirit of prayer begins to fail ; and verily if any people under heaven are ready to miscarry herein, we (that have our fill of peace, and our yokes broken off from our shoulders) are in most danger ; but if it be so, look for such shakings of all hearts, and churches also, as shall make you find your tongues, and knees, and ears, and hearts again, if the Lord means to dwell with you.

5. Not bringing forth the fruits of the kingdom, Matt. xxi. 43. Cut that church down that cumpers the ground, after many years pruning and wetting. That kingdom where there is church trading, but no considerable gain coming in, will consume quickly, and die of itself. Fruit is the last end of the tree : All duties you do, wherein you attain not, or, at least, aim not at your last and utmost end, that is not fruit ; fruit refresheth others that taste it ; when a christian walketh so as another is not the better, (not much refreshed) by him, but it may be hardened rather, by a sapless example, here is no fruit, and this calls for the axe to cut down the tree.

6. Divisions. This pulls down kingdoms without help

help of foreign enemies. If a kingdom thrusts swords into each other's bellies, this will soon dispatch them. It is the Jesuits plot to subdue by private divisions, whom they cannot conquer by force of arms : It was most pleasing to Satan to prevail with Christ to cast himself down headlong from the pinnacle, rather than to fling him down himself. It is the delight of hell to set and see churches at variance among themselves, this is the first thing he attempts in the best churches, and it is commonly prosperous, if the Lord leaves the watchmen to slumber, and not to be watchful, and fearful, and suddenly sensible of the least beginnings herein. It is a wonderful thing to see what a small occasion of offence will do ; a word, a gesture, a garment, a matter of indifferency, it is strange to see, how much small matters will gore, if Satan's head be in them, and his horns be set upon them, especially in churches where men are set at liberty, and enjoy it ; one must have liberty to speak one thing, and another, another thing ; I am of this mind, saith one ; I am not of that mind (brother) saith another : it is wonderful to see what a fire, a secret smother, and smoak of suspicion will do. But O take heed here, Gal. v. 15. Love the truth, receive no opinion differing from the most approved in the church suddenly, but weep, and pray, and ask counsel, and tremble to entertain a thought of contention : the first sin which brake out in the first christian church, was murmurings, Acts vi. 1. What follows ? Stephen an earthly angel, full of the Holy Ghost, suffers, and is taken from them, Acts vii. and after this the whole church is scattered, Acts viii. O keep the peace of the church, and rend it not for small matters, love one another sincerely, and you cannot but live together quietly.

CHAP. III. SECT. I.

Concerning the coming of Christ, and the security of professors.

THUS much of the place; now let us consider of the time when this preparation is made, set down in that word *Then*, which word hath reference to the 37th ver. of the xxivth chap. viz. to the days of the coming of the Son of man.

Quest. Now when are these days?

Ans. We shall read both in prophetical and apostolical writings, that all the time from the ascension to the second coming of Christ, is called the last days, Acts ii. 16, 17. Hence the primitive churches did (long since) and all the churches at this day ought, to live in a daily expectation of his coming again, as these virgins here did. And hence some think, that all this time may be the days of the coming of Christ, wherein all the churches either do, or should look out for the coming of Christ. Now although I dare not exclude these days (in a large sense) from being the days of Christ's coming, as being the last days; and it being the duty of all to wait for this coming of Christ, as well as those who lived long before us, 1 Thes. i. 10. 1 Cor. i. 7. yet I believe here is meant more particularly the latter part of those last days: for our Saviour having foretold of many things which shall fall out before his second coming, yet he seems to single out some particular time in these last days; to which he doth annex this (*then*), and that is evident to all that view well the text, that they are the days of his coming; for though all the days of the gospel may be called the days of the Son of man, and some days especially wherein there is some kind of coming of the Son of man, as when he comes to hear prayers, Luke xviii. 8, yet to speak properly, they are

are not the days of the coming of the Son of man. And look as the days of Noah were not all the days from the creation to the deluge, but those particular years before the flood, so it is here, some special times before his coming, are the days of his coming.

S E C T. II.

Quest. **BUT** what is this coming of Christ?

Ans. There is a double coming of Christ.

1. His coming to call the Jews, and to gather in the fulness of the Gentiles with them, which is called the "brightness of his coming," 2 Thes. ii. 8. When there shall be such a brightness of the truth, shining forth in the world, armed with such instruments as shall utterly destroy Antichrist, long before his second coming, Rev. xix. 19, 20.

2. His coming to judgment, Heb. ix. 28. 1 Cor. xv. 13, 24. When there shall be an universal resurrection of good and bad, 1 Thes. iv. 15, 16, 17. Now although it be true, that at the time of the coming of Christ, to call the Jews, the churches like chaste virgins shall wait and make themselves ready for the marriage of the Lamb, Rev. xi. 7. Yet the second coming of Christ seems to be the time which is here directly pointed at. Then shall those churches be virgin-churches, waiting for Christ's coming, both to their particular judgment, but especially to the general judgment, when he shall appear as a glorious Bridegroom to the consolation and salvation of those who in truth have waited for him the second time: For this coming of Christ spoken of in these two chapters, is that coming which is "in power" and great glory," (not in the churches spiritually) but "in the clouds of heaven," chap. xxiv. 38. Wherein he shall separate the sheep from the goats, the one to lie among devils, the other to possess (not an earthly kingdom here for a thousand years, as

some from mistaking the meaning of the 20th chapter of the Revelation imagine) but to inherit "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world," Mat. xxv. 34. which cannot be any better, nor any other, than the third heaven, where the face of God is seen, and where he hath had an innumerable host of glorious angels, his subjects to serve him, not only since the first time of man's creation, but the first foundation of the world, Gen. i. 1. Which also Christ himself "is gone to prepare for us," John xiv. 2, 3. And which Abraham's faith only expected, even a city which was not earthly, but heavenly, "which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," Heb. xi. 10, 11. So that although this parable looks most directly unto those times which are yet to come, yet as all examples registered in holy scripture for time past, are applicable and useful for us, so these that are yet to come, are alike instructive to us, especially in these times and places, wherein the Lord (according to his manner of working great things usually) gives among us some small, yet lively resemblance of those days.

S E C T. III.

Doct. THAT in those days of Christ's coming, wherein the churches of Christ, and professors of the gospel shall grow virgin-churches, all visible saints, when all members seem to be espoused to Christ, yet there will be found desperate folly in some, and in time great security will fall upon all.

Some there are who think the days we live in now, are not only the days of the Son of man, but part of the days of the coming of the Son of man, wherein the churches (especially in these places) grow to be virgin-professors: Our judgments hold it, our practice maintains it, all church-members are and must be visible saints, visible believers, virgins espoused to Christ, escaping the pollutions of idolatry and the world:

world : Take heed the Lord find not many of you foolish ; take heed that you are not so, that in time you grow not secure ; you have the pillow of peace to lie on, and the cares of the world to make you dream away your time, and you have no pinching persecutions to awaken you ; and if no wrestlings within, look for security there. Folly will be the death and bane of some, hence boast not. Security, a sleeping sickness, will be the disease of others, if the Lord prevent not : But I intend not to anchor here, only to set up marks at these flats, that you may avoid them and come not near them.

CHAP. IV. SECT. I.

Sheweth that the soul that will enjoy communion with Christ, must be divorced from all other lords, particularly from lusts, and from the law. The manner of its espousals unto Christ.

NOW therefore to come to the third thing ; the persons that make this preparation are set forth, 1. In what they all agree in, and that is, first, in that they are all virgins : What are these ? *Ans.* To omit the popish interpretation of their nuns, and mock-virgins,

I shall rather make use of scripture to give light to interpret this place : for opening of it, know, the whole church may be called the spouse of Christ, and take every member alone, a virgin attending on this spouse, Psa. xlv. nay the apostle, 2 Cor. xi. 2. calls the whole church a virgin ; so that by virgins are meant whole particular churches of Christ, together with the several members thereof. Now virgins are such as are fit for marriage, and not defiled with any man, as it is said of Rebecca ; so by virgins is meant those that are not polluted within or without with the evils

evils of the world, Rev. xiv. 4. but more is to be understood here, 2 Cor. xi. 2. when once marriage is come, they cease to be virgins, and are wives; yet when espoused to Christ, now they are spiritually virgins; hence these here are only like to virgins: so that the meaning of virgins is this, by virgins is meant such churches, or members of churches, as are divorced from all other lovers, and matched only to Jesus Christ: these only look for the coming of Christ, and communion with him, these only are received into communion.

S E C T. II.

Obs. 1. **W**HOOever look for everlasting communion with the bridegroom of the church Jesus Christ, must be virgins divorced from all others, and espoused only to Jesus Christ.

Here were indeed foolish ones among these, yet as foolish and blind as they were, they saw that this was the way, to be like the wife, to be virgins as well as they, Psa. xlv. 10. 11. Jer. iii. 19. 20. as a wife departs, so ye; "but how shall I put thee among the children, &c. you shall call me, my Father," *i. e.* one instead of all other things, "and shall not turn aside from me," Hof. ii. 23. there is there communion; hence the Lord will, 1. Take away the names of Balaam; 2. Betrothe them to himself.

S E C T. III.

Quest. **W**HAT is it to be divorced from all other lovers?

Ans. Idolatry is called whoredom in scripture, and this is one thing the soul must be divorced from before it can be matched to the Lord, Hof. ii. 2. I shall not need to press this here; but there are two other things which I shall shew, for there are two things that

that every man doth before he is espoused to the Lord Jesus; either first he departs and goes a-whoring by unlawfully lusting after the creature, Psa. lxxiii. 27. James iv. 4. Or, second, he is lawfully married as he thinks unto the law, Rom. vii. 3. 4. the law is there compared to a husband, from which Christ indeed delivers his; yet some will stick to it: either the soul takes content in some creature more than in Christ, or in some righteousness more than in the Lord Jesus: Now, to be divorced from all other things, is for the heart to be taken off from all worldly contentments. Secondly, from comforting itself in the bosom of its own work and righteousness, and this must be found in all them that look for communion with the Lord Jesus.

S E C T. IV.

THE heart must be divorced from lusts after, and pleasures in any creature; for proof, we must know this:

1. The soul of every man must have something to quiet and comfort it like the stomach: it is death and hell to want it (as the Israelites in the wilderness) hence it must have it.

2. There is nothing that can comfort the thirsty heart, but it is either in the spring, or cistern, fountain, or bottles, either in God, or in the creature.

3. Hence man having lost God and all good there, seeks for it in the creature, and because he finds not enough in one, digs for it in another, Psa. iv. 'Who will shew us any good?' and hence the soul, because it never found that infinite sweetness in God himself, hence lusts after, and delights in the creature for itself, loves pleasure for pleasure, delights in the creature for the creature, not for God, why should he, seeing he never found content there? And here the soul of man cleaves night and day, committing spiritual

ritual whoredom before the face of God ; now if ever any soul has communion with Christ, it must be divorced from all creatures thus, for lust is a desire after, and content in the creature for the creature's sake.

Reasf. 1. Because while the heart is in league with any creature besides the Lord, it is at deadly enmity with the Lord, James iv. 4. If a man hath a rich commodity, and one comes and offers half the worth of it, he takes it as a contempt ; if it be not worth this, it is worth nothing ; so the Lord is worthy of all our love, our lives, our souls though we had a thousand of them, and will a man not part with his lusts for him ? I tell you, the Lord takes himself slighted, contemned, and loathed ; if not worth all a man's love, he is worth nothing : now the creature is made a God, because made a man's last end, which is as proper to God, as to make him the Alpha of all. Here the greatest wrath is to give a man his fill of the creature.

Reasf. 2. Because so long the soul cannot see, nor come by the eye and feet of faith to the Lord Jesus, John v. 44. and think Christ better than all ; as birds in a string may fly high, but when they come to the end of the line, fall down there ; and so though the soul flies to Christ, yet when indeed it comes to the end of parting with all, it falls down, and falls off from Christ. Whole men have no heart nor desire after physicians ; when all limbs are whole and strong, no desire after plaisters : so while any thing eases and contents the heart, there is no desire after Christ. Hof. iv. 11. " Whoredom and wine have taken away the heart."

Reasf. 3. Because so long the heart if it do come, cannot stay with Christ to do any thing for Christ, Mat. vi. 24. " You cannot serve God and riches," i. e. two masters, who have constant employment, and Christ hath set us such employment. Hence men

on sick-beds are tame as may be, promise any thing, because their joy in the creature is gone: Hence on the other side, many men, after many springings of heart, are choaked by thorns of the world.

Reas. 4. From the abundant love that the Lord Jesus shews to them that ever have, or look for communion with him. Those to whom we shew much love, from those we expect much again. As a man if taken or cast out to be servant, one looks not for love from him; but when a man hath given himself, and made over all his estate to another, now all love is too little. So it is with the Lord Jesus, John vi. "Will you also depart?"

S E C T. V.

2. **T**HE soul must be divorced from the law. *i. e.* from comforting itself with the righteousness thereof. For explication of which, we must consider these things.

1. That the Lord doth not ever give a man content in his sins and lusts, but wounds conscience for the same.

2. That so long as the Lord wounds a man's conscience for sin, no creature can give a man comfort or content. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" Judas casts away his silver pieces; and Belshazzar quakes, who was but even now quaffing in his cups. As a man that hath an aching tooth, or broken bones, what can comfort him now?

4. Hereupon the law falls upon a man, or a man meets with the law; for as all a man's sorrow is upon him, because the law is broken, all a man's care is how he may keep it again. What shall I do? As a man cast in prison for debt, there all is opened; and the law like an earnest suitor, 1. Presseth hard for love and obedience. 2. Promiseth a rich portion, e-

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ternal

ternal life, if he can keep it; if not, you must be damned; therefore now forsake your sins, &c.

4. Hence the soul, not knowing a better husband, consents and resolves to cleave to it, Rom. x. 3. Deut. v. "Whatever the Lord will have us do, we will do it;" and here it stays, and is comforted, here it rests; as in Aſa his time all rejoiced for the oath, 2 Chron. xv. Iſa. lviii. 1, 2. and if it find not perfect comfort because of imperfect work, it then cloſeth with Chriſt for to make up and piece up all, Gal. v. 1. And now I ſay, it is comforted in what it hath, and doth, and here it reſts; now from hence it muſt be divorced: What need I prove it, when the apoſtle hath ſo fully, *Galat. per totum*, and conſider the young man, Matth. xix. Divorced, I ſay, the ſoul muſt be from this.

1. Becauſe he that doth thus, ſets up another Chriſt, and makes himſelf his own ſaviour; can the Lord Jeſus take ſuch a ſoul into communion with him? Suppoſe a prince be pulled by his people from his throne, and they ſet up another pious prince to rule, will this ſerve the turn to ſay he is an honeſt prince? ſo though duties be never ſo good, yet not to advance Chriſt, is to pull down Chriſt.

2. Becauſe ſuch perſons do commonly moſt oppoſe the Lord Jeſus in a way of believing, though not in a way of doing; the Lord hath more ado if any of theſe be brought home, to bring them in, they have ſomewhat to ſay for themſelves, they have ſtronger forts, &c. The Scribes and Pharifees rejected the counſel of God, againſt themſelves, and hence no people left to ſuch deep deſertions as theſe, if the Lord intend mercy to them, for they have more need than others.

3. Becauſe hereby a man doth but make a conſpiracy againſt God's greateſt plot that ever he had a-foot, viz. to advance his free grace, Gal. v. 4. you are fallen from grace, for nothing makes a man more fit to
boast

boast than works, and resting in them; sin makes a man ashamed, and therefore if they come to heaven, they have laid a foundation to thank themselves for somewhat; hence no communion with Jesus Christ in this frame; no, the Lord will tear down this foundation, and make the soul cry guilty, and make this husband, the law, to be judge, to examine, and condemn, and now come to ask, What have you to plead for your life and peace? It hath no plea to shew but mercy, &c. it hath its duties evidencing against it.

S E C T. VI.

2. **T**HE soul now comes to be espoused to the Lord Jesus.

Quest. How?

Ans. 1. The soul beholding the glory of the Lord Jesus, makes choice of him, as in all marriage-bonds there is a choice made, and if love be great, there is little standing on terms: let me have him though I beg with him; so the soul sees such a suitableness in the Lord Jesus, as that it stands not on terms, let me have him though in prison with him, though in the garden in agonies with him, though in the cross in desertions with him, he is enough, as Peter when he saw Christ on the sea, desired he might come to him there, Heb. xi. 26. "Choosing the reproach of Christ," &c. and look as Christ chooseth the soul, 1. The whole soul. 2. Everlastingly. 3. Above all others: so it makes choice of Christ, whole Christ, Phil. iii. 9. 2. Everlastingly, "The Lord is my portion forever." Psalm. lxxiii. 26. And before ever you can look for communion with him, you must make this choice of him, and glad too you may have him on any terms; nay put it to any soul the Lord hath done good to, and ask it, will you have him? It is such a mercy I cannot conceive how one so vile as I should have it: have him the Lord of glory, the Prince of life and

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peace;

peace; O yes; hence Peter said, "Master, what shall we have that have forsaken all, and followed thee?" You shall sit with me on thrones; and look as Christ now chuseth the soul above others, as well as in heaven, John xv. 16. so it now chuseth Christ, "Whom have I in heaven or earth;" many when they think of death, or are dying, then chuse him, but not now, or chuse him for outward blessings, not spiritual favour and life, John vi. 26, 27.

2. The soul hence gives itself like one espoused to her husband, to the Lord Jesus, Cant. ii. 16. "I am my beloved's:" servants give work for their wages, and masters give wages for their work, but husbands and wives give themselves one unto another; suitors also give tokens to draw on love, not themselves; so servants in the church, they do for God in hope of wages, and the Lord blesteth them it may be outwardly; but he that is espoused to Christ, gives himself, Lord I can do nothing for thee, give nothing to thee, but I give myself to thee, that thou wouldst work in me, and by me, Rom. vi. 13. So the Lord is a suitor to many a man that never gives himself to him: he gives them some comforts, some winning, drawing, melting mercies, but not himself; they give him some entertainment, and good words, a thousand wishes, as Capernaum did, but not themselves; but this must be, if ever you look for communion with him: hence David saith, "I am thine, save me;" hence some made shipwreck of faith, they were not the Lord's; hence the Lord saith, he knows who are his, 2 Tim. ii. 18, 19. his send their tokens again: for look as it is an evidence of much love when a man gives the dearest thing he hath, viz. his whole self to the Lord Jesus, so it is also an evidence of little love, when he will not give, especially another's own: thou art none of thine own, thou hast but little love if thou give not thyself to him, without which never look for life and communion with the Lord.

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3. The soul hence takes full contentment in the Lord Jesus, as a spouse hath enough, would not change for all the world, as Peter when he had a glimpse of Christ's glory, "Lord, let us be here;" or as Simeon that had been waiting for the consolation of Israel, when once he had Christ in his arms, "Now let thy servant depart in peace:" I have enough, now let me die, and not live to sin more; and it is certain as there is somewhat in creatures that contents the heart without Christ in an unregenerate man, so contrarywise in a regenerate, John iii. 29. if hearing the bridegroom is joy, what is having him? indeed they take content in other things, but as coming from the husband; and this you must do if ever you look for communion with him; cannot you be content with the Lord alone in heaven; you shall never come there then, lest you quarrel for want of something. Men make nothing of this, to bathe their hearts in the sun, and joy in what they have, and hope to have, but the Lord may be gone, and you grieve not; why? because other things ease your hearts. There can be no communion hereafter if you despise it now.

S E C T. VII.

Use 1. **T**His serves to discover the great error, most common and dangerous of the whole christian world, who think that they may love and embrace the world and the Lord Jesus too, and be saved at last by him too, *i. e.* they may not be virgins, but go a-whoring from Christ, and yet partake of Christ, and mercy from him: that look as it was in those sad days, Isa. iv. 1. so in these days many lay hold on Jesus Christ, they will eat their own bread, live on their own lusts, and wear their own apparel, their own rags, only let us be called by thy name (Believers) to take away our reproach, for that is an open shame not to believe in Christ: For this is the professed thought of
some;

some; every one is a sinner, and I am one, and a great one too, and who can say his heart is clean, none can free himself from sin in this life, and I cannot do it if I would: and hence look on Christ to save them, though sin sleeps in them: you cannot have both: I would but enquire, hath not every man something that contents him? what is it? is it the love, the fellowship of Jesus? yes, it may be at a sacrament, and it may be not; for thou mayest say, the Lord never yet revealed his love and self unto me, never yet assured me, yet somewhat joys thy heart. What think you, can you have the Lord, and content yourselves thus with other things? why? I trust to him I hope so; it cannot be so. If the Lord Jesus was a patron of brothel houses, a protector of stewes, you might think so; some say they cannot pray to him, nor prize him; why? something else contents them besides him; but know it cannot be so: I know a saint may be taken aside, as David with envy at others prosperity; but when he considers of it, O what a beast! he returns again. The raven and the dove were sent forth, the one came again and again, the other not; therefore as Joshua xxiv. brought the people to these thoughts "you cannot serve the Lord, and other gods," as Junius notes, so bring thyself to that strait: O that the Lord would set on this one thing this day! when I sadly weigh it, it confounds me, and makes me say, Lord, who then can be saved! I know with God all things are possible, but this is rare.

S E C T. VIII.

Use 2. **HENCE** we may learn who they are that never shall have everlasting communion with the Lord Jesus, viz. those that never were espoused to him, and you may know this, if never yet divorced from all others besides him, Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26. I shall stay a while here, because there is never an un-
found

found heart in the world, but as they say of witches, they have some familiar that sucks them, so they have some lust that is beloved of them, some beloved there is they have given a promise to, never to forsake; and also, because most men do seem and think they are virgins espoused to Christ, and look for communion with him, and yet not divorced from all other besides him. I shall shew hence,

1. When the soul is in league with the creature.
2. When married to the law. I should account it happy if any be found out.

CHAP. V. SECT. I.

Sheweth the marks and signs whereby the soul may know whether he be in league or love with any lust or creature, or married to the law.

THOSE that never were in bitterness and sorrow of heart for the loss of God. For these two things are as clear as the sun:

1. That the loss of God is the greatest loss; for it is the utmost and last plague upon the damned in hell: my comforts, my friends, means, heaven is gone, but if God were mine, I would be comforted; no, God is gone: hence no sorrow for any loss so much as for this. Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, "God is departed, from me." Hence sore distressed. Nay, the Lord Jesus, when the Father departed for a time, and he knew he would return and visit him, cried out, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
2. That all men living have lost God, Isa. lix. 1, 2. Psal. lviii.
3. "The wicked go astray from their womb." Now I would demand why men either feel no loss at all, or if they do, have not so much grace as the damned in hell, to mourn bitterly for it, so as nothing can comfort them, or if they do, they are soon eased, and
quieted

quieted before the Lord returns? Why surely here is the great cause of it, they have some other thing to ease their hearts in the want and loss of God, Jer. ii. 13, 14. Men must have water to drink, why do men live from the fountain, nor go to it, nay not know it? Because they have broken pits, and wells at their own doors: so here. And hence the damned that have lived at ease here all their life-time, as soon as ever dead, then they cry out of the loss of God, when it is too late, because while they lived, they had somewhat to ease themselves withal. And hence many that have lived long with convinced spirits and guilty consciences, when they come to die, then they are in perplexities of mind, agonies of heart, insomuch as their sweat trickles like water from them, and their doleful out-cries for loss of time, strike to the hearts of all that come near them. Oh! God is gone, because now all comforts which were their gods, and instead of God before, have taken their final leave of them. Search your hearts therefore all you that hear me this day. Wast thou never troubled yet? Yes, I have lost my health, my child, my husband, my goods, and this hath troubled me: But tell me, didst thou never feel a loss of God blessed forever? loss of his light, his sweetness, his love, his fellowship, his presence, &c. and this hath been thy intolerable load? Or if thou hast felt it, hast thou sought and found him? No, but art jocund in that estate, and now and then it troubles thee a little, then it is certain and as clear as the sun, there is some creature or content that thy heart is in league withal, which easeth thee in the want of God, and which is instead of God to thee, and which therefore is thy God. It may be thy apparel, thy wife, child, &c. and if thou die in this estate, never shalt thou have communion with Jesus Christ, "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

Sign 2. Dost thou find the Lord a stranger to thee
in

in all his ordinances, wherein it may be the Lord sweetly and wonderfully and mightily, yet not alway, but seasonably reveals himself to others. Oh but thy heart dries and parches away, and that without much trouble under them all. If so, suspect it, believe it that there is some league with a lust. For there is a double life of a christian. 1. An outward life, which others see: Men see he comes to church, prays in the family, &c. 2. There is a secret inward life; according to that of Matth. vi. 6. "Thy Father which sees in secret," which none knows but himself, and the Lord; and this is an ineffable communion with God, vision of God, delight in God, &c. Psal. xlv. "The King's daughter is all glorious within." There is an open life of prayer, and hearing, and fasting, and there is an inward, secret life in all these, wherein the Lord acquaints himself with his people, Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2, 3. "To see thee as I have seen thee." Now there be divers have this open life; yet wanting the secret life. As we love not to live among tombs, nor to have any communion with dead men; so the Lord is a stranger to them. He may secretly sweeten an ordinance to them, and move them, and shake and trouble them, but himself is a stranger, spiritual miseries not removed, spiritual mercies not conveyed, Isa. lviii. 1, 2, 3, 4. "Why have we fasted, and thou regardest not? You took pleasure saith the Lord, and break the bonds of wickedness," &c. I know saints may be thus denied, and it may be for some space of time, yet they quarrel not with God for denying them, but are more taken off from pleasures thereby. "Thou hidst thy face, and I was troubled," though the mount stood still. But some there be whom neither good day mends them, nor bad day pairs them: Surely there is some content thy heart is bewitched withal. That look as it is with a suitor to another, let him while he comes to her, profess never so much

F

love,

love, and desire love, yet if when he goes from her, commits lewdness with every one, she will lock him out. So it is here; never did I know any locked out from the power and sweetness of ordinances, but because they went a-whoring from God out of them. The Lord knows (though others do not) whether it is so with you. Look therefore upon thyself, you enjoy great means every where in this place. Is it enough to have ordinances? the ark? No, do you find the Lord in them? blessed be God. But tell me truly, do you find no want of God? Yes. Do you find him? I find more knowledge, strength, &c. But do you find no God usually? No. Then either some creature contents thee, or if the Lord should refresh thee, thou wouldst be content without him. Man and wife will (if they love) meet at meals, John xiv. But when no meeting, dead prayers, dry sermons, sapless sacraments, worse than before. If thou art the Lord's he will by afflictions purge, &c. But if thou continuest so, look for no communion in heaven.

Sign 3. Dost thou find no rest in any thing that thou hast? For this is clear, nothing can give rest to a man's soul but God: He is big enough only to fill it, and then a man hath it, Isa. xxvi. 3. Now if no rest, it is a sign thy heart sticks to the creature, yet thou sayest I would fain have the Lord: It may be so; but thou wouldst have creatures too. And hence God will not, and creatures cannot give the fulness of rest. Thus it was with Solomon, Eccles. ii. 3. So it is with thee, thou findest thy soul delighting itself in all things; yet vanity and vexation, and withal giving thyself to wisdom too. It is true, a saint feels an emptiness in these things, yet he feels a fulness in something else. (He hath better meat which you know not of) which Solomon did not for a time, yet afterward he did. But thou findest a vanity and trouble, and art never at peace when all is done, wea-

ry of world: But hath the Lord swallowed thee up into himself, in the cloud of his glory, so that in his favour and presence thou findest life? No: Then there is some lust thou lovest, and dying thus, shall never see the face of Christ. Yea, this will come as a heavy indictment against thee, that God hath so wearied thee in thy way. Yet Jer. ii. 25. "There is no hope, after thy lovers thou wilt go." You shall scarce find any but feel the creature vain, and yet get not to rest in God.

S E C T. II.

Discoveries whether we are married to the law or not. And here I shall stay longer. Where I premise,

1. When I speak of not being married to the law instead of Christ, I do not hereby exempt yourselves from obedience to the law, after you are in Christ.

2. Do not think I speak against all evidencing your estates from conformity to the law; though I do from some subjection and obedience performed to the law.

1. If the law was never dead in thee, thou art married to the law, Rom. vii. 2. Now look as it is with a husband, if the wife be sick, and he be at home, whoever forsakes her, he will comfort her, and support and chear her; so that if he chear her not, it is a sign he is dead; if he doth, it is a sign he is alive; for the life of the law, is the comfort and support that the law doth give for a time. So that thou wert never brought to that sore strait, that thou hast not felt any one duty to chear or revive thee, and comfort thee, but hast found some little thing or other to do it, it is certain you are yet married to the law. *Ex. gr.* It may be thou hast been troubled in mind for thy sins; what hath cheared thee? I have forsaken them, and cast out Jonah, and there has been a calm: Why

this forsaking thy sins (which hath not been all but some) is not Christ, but an act of the law. Oh but I have fallen again into sins, this hath troubled thee: What hath cheared thee? I have repented and been sorry for them, and purposed to do so no more. This is the life of the law still. Oh but you find sins prevailing against you, and you cannot part with them; and hence dare not resolve against them. Oh but my desire is good, though my will hath ever been against them. Oh ignorance! This desire is but a work of the law, it is not Christ. Oh but I have found no desire sometime: What hath quieted you now? I have trusted to Christ: You have done it. The Lord never made you feel a need of the Lord, to draw you to trust; though to be assured of Christ's love. Is this a legal act?

Ans. As obedience to the law done by the power of Christ, is an evangelical work, so to perform any evangelical work from a man's self, is a legal work; and you are under the life of the law. So that thou hast not been brought to that pass as the church, the spouse was, Isa. liv. 5, 6. And as one of my best friends, and best men that lives this day in the world, after many wrestlings to find somewhat in himself to cheer him, and could not; now saith he, "if the Lord out of his good nature, &c. do not help me, I am undone forever; for I have a heart and a nature against him, and the more I do, the worse I am." And therefore thither I look. Surely you are under the life of the law, and are far enough off from Christ, if not sensible of this. Not that a man is always thus; for he that cannot feel afterward the Lord Jesus by the power of his grace working in his heart, I would conclude, he never had any at all. But at first it is so. For these two things man naturally seeks, To have a righteousness in himself that will ease him.

2. To have it from himself: Kitchen physic is not far to fetch.

Now the Lord's plot in saving his, is, 1. To make them seek it out of themselves in another: "Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth." 2. To have all from another, that so, "no flesh might glory before him." And to doubt of this, is to doubt whether God hath plotted the glory of his grace or no. Hence the Lord empties the soul of both, that the soul saith, "Ashur shall not save us," Hof. xiv. 3, 4. None durst, none can comfort it. And now to the wonderment of heaven, and everlasting joy of a poor cast-away, and the eternal honour of his free grace, now, and never till now, doth he begin to make the match between the Lord Jesus and this poor soul: And as the Lord never comes to him till now, so he never will come to the Lord, while he hath the least good; as it was with the prodigal, while any hulks, or as it was with the woman with her bloody issue, while any money to spend on other physicians, never will try what Christ can do. And therefore those that never yet knew of the death of the law; they are yet married to it, Rom. ii. 17. I know many a soul grieves for the death of this husband, and now thinks it is undone, I cannot do this and that, though formerly I could indeed; I say, if there be any love of Christ, now is the time of it. Only understand God's scope here in it.

Sign 2. If a man complains more or chiefly for want of grace or righteousness, to remove sin, and not so much for want of Jesus Christ: Then in this case it is as it is with a woman, that man for whose absence she mourns most, that is her husband: She saith the other is, no but he is not. So this is the estate of many a soul, they have neither Christ nor righteousness: Now they complain so much that their hearts sink and die away quite within them: And what is it for? I cannot do this, nor I do not find nor feel such signs

signs and affections within me. Such a vile heart, I know, not the like, such rising in my heart to sin and thoughts of it; why if you had Christ, all this would be mended. "I can do all through Christ." But you complain not for want of Christ, nor need of him from these two arguments,

1. Because the feeling of your sins, does not make you feel a greater need of Christ, as John, "I have need to be baptized," &c. but drive you further from Christ, and reason it out against him: And why? Because you would have a righteousness without him which you stand in need of.

2. Because he that feels a need of the Lord Jesus, shall not when he is offered, need intreating to take him; as you shall not need intreat hungry men to eat their bread, you shall not need to intreat Zacheus to receive Christ joyfully. But no commands, no intreaties can prevail with you to take him when he is offered, you have no heart to it. Like women that love their own husbands grieve so for their absence, that they have no heart to any other offer. Is it thus with thee? Then it is with thee, as it was with that young man, that asks Christ what he should do to inherit eternal life; he liked Christ well, but he did not feel a need of Christ himself so much, as of some more knowledge of the law, and ability to do it. It is the great plot of Arminians, to make Christ a means only, to make every man a first Adam; setting men to work for their living again; for they grant all grace is lost, all comes from Christ, Christ gives all, and to Christ we must look for all; and then when we have it, use it well, thus you shall have life, else look for death: So it is a misery many a soul is in. Men will trade in small wares, rather than live on another's alms. Do you think the Lord takes it well to make him a merchant for your ends? Oh no, never look to have communion with him in this!

Sign 3. Those that close with, but rejoice more in a little

little grace they receive from Christ, than in all the fulness in Christ, more in a little they do, than in all the Lord Jesus hath done, Phil. iii. 3. That is a woman's husband, whom she rejoiceth most. Do you rejoice more in what you have received from him (for a hypocrite may receive from Christ, John xv. 2.) than in what there is in him? It argues a whorish heart. I know a man may rejoice in what Christ works in him, but 1. not more in this than in Christ himself. 2. A child of God may, while he knows not whether Christ is his, do so: but you think the Lord is your's; well when you feel affections and life then you are glad, when that is lost then sad; why is there no life when thou art dead, no glory when thou art base, no wisdom, no communion with God when thou hast none? Yes, why dost thou not rejoice in this which is here most fully, which saints presenting, please the Lord more by, than by giving the glory of angels infinite millions of years: Oh thy heart is not in love with Christ, but somewhat else, for here is the joy of all saints, "In thy seed shall all nations account themselves blessed:" all nations, one and another, Isa. xlv. 24, 25. "Shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Consider therefore this, thou art sometime joyed; why? O I find my heart thus and thus; and is this all? yes, for when this is gone, all joy dies; and should I not do thus? yes, else thou never felt comfort of it: but not only rejoice here, but when the beam is gone, the Lord is not gone, Rom. vii. *ult.* when the bottles are spent, the spring is full.

4. He that performs any duty ultimately to ease his conscience, he is married yet unto the law; for there are two sorts of duties to the law.

1. Some are directed to give Christ content to ease his heart, by seeing God's love in Christ, then love being shed, the heart sheds it on Christ again: and thus

thus saith the apostle, "I through the law am dead to it, that I might live to God," Gal. ii. 19.

2. Some are to give the soul ease, it sees sin, and fears it must die, and the devil appears, and when it lies down, it fears it shall never awaken again; and when it hears, thinks no mercy, but only threats belong to it: and hence having no peace of conscience to think God will love it, it loves duties, doth duties, and now takes these for good tokens and signs of love, and if it feels a need of Christ, it is only to ease it. Now a man is married to the law, when he crowds for ease into the bosom of it, Deut. v. 37. they were in great fear, "Whatever God will have us do, we will do it:" is it not thus with many? How shall we know this?

Ans. Dost thou find this while fears and terrors of conscience are on thee, so long thou dost seek, and pray, and hear, and call on God, and when they are worn away with time, or blown over with feeling some good things, and hopes from them, then thy heart is careless again; it is certain you are yet married to the law: as many a man exceeding forward while prest under sense of sin for a year or two. Lord! how many hundreds drop away by little and little afterwards? Deut. v. 29 "Oh that there were such a heart alway." Matth. iii. 3, 7 to 13. they saw a wrath to come, hence feared, and hence came to John's baptism to repent and confess him.

5. No man that is married to the law, but his fig-leaves ever cover some nakedness; all the duties ever brood some lust: there is some one sin or other the man lives in, which either the Lord discovers, and he will not part with, as the young man, or else is so spiritual he cannot see all his life-time; read through the strictest of all, and see this, Matth. xxiii. painted sepulchres: Paul that was blameless, yet Eph. ii. 3. Tit. iii. 3. served divers "lusts and pleasures, and the reason is, the law is not the ministration of the Spirit,

Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8, 9. which breaks off from every sin, there is no law that can give life, Gal. iii. 21. And hence many men have strong resolutions, and break all again; hence men sin, and sorrow, and pray again, and then go with more ease in their sin; examine thyself, is there any living lust with thy righteousness? it is sure it is a righteousness that thou art married to, and never wert yet matched to Christ; hence note thyself, it may be thou hast rested in duties, and since more light came, saw it; and seeing this, thinking that here is all thy error, thou hast laboured to see the emptiness of thy own righteousness, and the fulness of Christ, and now thou art come to both, and now well. So then thou hast not found out any lust thou livest in all that time; nor the venom of thy old nature; no; why then I pronounce thou art yet married to the law, take and trust never so much to Christ's righteousness, if under the power of a proud heart, an unclean heart still, never speak of Christ.

Sign 6. They that are fearful to be troubled at their estate to have it prove ill, which a saint may do, yet brings it out to the light at last, John iii. 20. When a woman is married to a condemned man, guilt being upon him, he loves not to be seen abroad in the sight of others; thou hearest a sermon, and art loath it should be found out, loath to be troubled; he that hath righteousness in Christ will not only bring it to trial, before men, but God himself. Now is it thus with any of you? what shall I say? shall I say that Christ is or may be thine in this estate? truly if I durst I should; bless thyself thou mayest: but remember that the Lord will take thee to do for it; and what is it to lose communion with Christ? I cannot express it. The disciples were sad when he went away from them in his abasement, but for the Lord to leave thee, when in his glory, to stand afar off and see him go, never to see him more, when no

tears shall ever prevail again; therefore if thou hast been found out this day, confess and give glory to God, and let thine eyes be tears, that Christ would overcome and draw thy soul with love, and espouse thee to himself for ever.

C H A P. VI.

Containing motives and arguments to persuade us unto the love of Christ, and to be espoused to him.

Use 3. **I**S there no communion to be had with the Lord Jesus, unless virgins? unless espoused to him? Oh therefore here is a match for you, chuse him, get your affections, if entangled, to come off if ensnared to any other thing, and set your hearts, bestow your love upon him. For it is not a dead faith, (but such a faith as is animated by love) that does espouse you to him, Gal. v. 6. "Faith which works by love." And therefore as the love of other things (not worth looking after) has got the sovereignty and royalty of thy heart, so this is a conjugal love, when it bears rule in the heart; let Christ have this love. And as you have loved creatures for themselves, now love the Lord Jesus for himself. And as they have easily enticed you to set your hearts upon them, now be persuaded to set your dearest affections on him. It is said of John Baptist, he was the bridegroom's friend, to speak for him, John iii. 29. And truly it is the main work of the ministry to woo for Christ; and so to prevent chaste virgins to Christ. This shall be my work now, which may be seasonable in this decaying time. Therefore I shall chiefly bend my speech to three sorts.

1. To them that never yet loved the Lord Jesus, unless it be from the teeth outward.

2. Those

2. Those that have been striving for this, yet cannot to their own feeling come to this.

3. Those that have so, but their affections are dried up, and love is parched away, "iniquity abounds," &c. And my motives shall be these four :

1. Consider the glory of the person, whom I shall be a spokes-man for this day.

2. Consider he makes love to thee.

3. Consider that all he seeks for is love.

4. Consider what he will do for thee, how he will love thee, if thou wilt love him.

S E C T. I.

CONSIDER the glory of the person, for whom I plead for love. What can you love besides him? Where can you find any like unto him? I know the glory of the Lord is not revealed, because the grass withers not, the flower fades not, the creature appears not in his withering vanity, Isa. xl. But if the Lord would but open your eyes, to see him, this would win your hearts alone to him.

Now I shall single out only these five things, to give you a glimpse of his glory. Lift up thy heart, and say, "Lord, hide not now thy face from me."

1. He is the prince of the kings of the earth, Rev. i. 5. The glory of the world is a kingdom, the glorious diamond of that kingdom is a prince in his glory; now for a poor beggar to have an offer of love from the greatest prince in the world, would it not tempt her? Would she not forsake her lovers, and set her heart on him? Why look what a distance there is between the poorest peasant and the highest prince, so base, and a thousand times are all the princes of the world to Christ, whose dominion is from sea to sea, from sun to sun, who sets up and pulls down kings like counters, who rules their courts, their kingdoms, their hearts, and they do not do, they cannot

do, but what he will. Other kings are princes, are rulers of men, Christ prince of kings. Now who would not be glad of his love? who having tasted death, is set down on the right hand of God, on high, cloathed with endless glory, who has kings in his chains, whose breath is not in his nostrils, whose favour is not for a day, but he lives and reigns forever. Now does Christ reign? Is he a Lord, and in glory upon his throne? Methinks I see Jesus at the right hand of God, your foolish affections have undone you if you love him not.

2. He is appointed by the Father to be judge of quick and dead, at the last day, John v. 22, 23, as well as to rule all now. So that if you do maintain enmity against him, he may let you alone, you may live in health, and die in peace, in the eye of man, and in thine own eyes too: Yet there is a day coming he will break out of heaven, with a shout, and appear in the clouds in the amazing glory of his Father, "With all his mighty angels, and all the "dead shall hear his voice," and you shall appear before him with this body, when the heavens shall burn round about him, and the earth shall tremble under him, and all guilty eyes mourning and wailing because of him. Then you shall know what it is to despise him, and wish, O that I had loved him, Rev. i. 7. You that say you love him, yet by an impenitent heart pierce him, you shall wail, even so, Amen. Men do not see an end of these things, nor the glory of the Lord another day. Hence creatures are loved, and the Lord of glory is loathed. A great prince may not be so highly esteemed, until he appears in his state. Prisoners would give any money, much more love, for the judge's favour.

3. He only is the procurer and author of all the good that ever thou didst suck out here, though thou hast neither known him, nor been thankful to him. For look as it was with angels, so it should have been
with

with man; the wrath of God should have been poured out upon him, and on all the world, and creatures should have been tormentors of him, but that the Lord Jesus begged and bought the world. And hence, 1 Tim. iv. 10, called "Saviour of all, but chiefly of the elect." Micah iv. 4. "In his days men shall sit under vines and fig-trees:" So that if ever any creature did thee good, it was Jesus that put that sweetness in it, out of his fulness, and set it a-work, sent it to thee, gave it thee to do thee good. Thou shouldst never have had wink of sleep, never restrained from one sin, but lived in blaspheming God, never have heard of a gospel but for Christ: And will you not love him? O ungrateful world! unnatural generation of men! Why dost thou love any creature? It is for the paint of it and good in it. If there be so much in it, what is there in Christ that gave it, that dropt it into it? Never love him if there be any thing good that is not by him, Psal. cxvi. 1. "The Lord hath heard my prayer, I will call on him as long as I live." Much more when the Lord hath delivered, and thou didst never seek to him.

4. He is the everlasting wonderment of saints in heaven; the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon, which made her come to see him, but she before imagined but that which now she saw with her own eyes, and that wrapt her out of herself. Here we hear of the Lord Jesus, of his beauty and glory, and this draws saints to him, and when come, they see that which they never saw before, especially when in heaven: then fall down in everlasting admiration at this mystery, for the blessedness of saints is to see Christ in his glory, John xvii. 24. Now this lies in an infinite good, this cannot be seen in a finite time: hence saints shall be piercing their eyes deeper and deeper into this mystery, and shall ever see more and more, but never see all, and this is their joy and glory in heaven;

heaven; is it so? what think you, is Christ worthy of your love or not? look upon all the glory of the field of this world, you may see an end of all perfection, but never here.

5. He is the delights and bosom love of God himself, Prov. viij. 30. Hence John when he came to set Christ out, John iii. 35. "The Father loveth the Son." Now is it so, surely though you see not, taste not this good, yet there it is; now tell me if this person do not challenge love! would you not be glad to have him? you will say, can he look upon such a wretch, embrace such a leper as I? no surely he will never do it.

S E C T. II.

CONSIDER he makes love to thee, not one soul that hears me this day, but the Lord Jesus is a suitor unto, that now ye would be espoused to him: "He came unto his own, and they received him not." Whatever the secret purpose of Christ is, I regard not: In this evangelical dispensation of grace, he makes love to all, John i. 12. It is clear, Matth. xxii. 2. 3. If there be a gospel in the world, there is this love of Christ yearning towards all; especially all that have this gospel of peace sent to them, Luke ii. 10. "It is tidings of great joy to all people," as law is tidings of great sorrow to all people, Luke ii. 14. Angels from heaven preached this good will towards men. For if the challenge of love from men should be founded on his actual love to some, having died for some, then the offer would be particular. But it is grounded, 1. On his own worth and glory, and hence he challengeth love. 2. On this, for ought I know he has loved me. So that thou art not so vile, but the Lord Jesus his heart is toward thee, and his eye is upon thee for love. But it is not all love, but only some that overcomes. 1. Now it is real love,

love. 2. Fervent love. 3. Constant. 4. Pure love
he makes to thee.

1. It is real love, when the gospel and ministers seek for love, the Lord is real in his desires, there is no collusion or dissembling, 2 Cor. v. 20. in Christ's stead, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me;" thou thinkest the Lord cares not for thee, nor doth not desire thee though he doth others: but

1. Either the Lord would have thee loath him, or love him; what think you?

2. If the Lord did not make love to thee, he would not be really angry for rejecting of this love, but the Lord is really angry for rejecting it, and wroth with nothing so much as that, Psal. ii. 12. here he swears in his wrath, Psal. xcv. 11. when he opens his bosom for thee to rest in, and thou wilt not.

3. Look but upon the dealings of God with thee:

1. Hast thou not oft thought some in hell better than thee? why the ruin of millions of men is to win love from thee, Jer. iii. 8, 9, 10. 2. Hath not the Lord sent many a mercy to thee, not one but was to win thee, Psal. lxxxi. 10, 11, 12. 3. Hath not the Lord with-held many from thee, as here in this wilderness, Jer. iii. 3, 4. 4. Hath not the Lord sent many sorrows, terrors, fears, cares, wearisome businesses, that thou hast wished an end of life? this is love, Hos. ii. 6. 5. Hath not the Lord moved thy heart many a time toward him by persuasions, arguments which have a power to move the heart, this is love, Hos. xi. 4. "Cords of a man." 6. Hath not the Lord oft melted thy heart for mercies, as David when he might have killed Saul; truly you may feel his love which is much towards you; that which keeps off thy heart from love is, the Lord intends it not to me, he is not plain with me. But he sends to thee his plain gospel which thou art to attend unto; and he takes fittest seasons to speak to thee now in the time
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of thy health : and doth he not oft visit thy heart when thou art alone ?

2. It is fervent, vehement, earnest love : sometimes a suitor is real, but he is not earnest ; now thus the Lord is : 1. The Lord longs for this, Deut. v. 29. 2. Pleads for this, Jer. ii. 5. " What iniquity," &c. 3. Thinks long for this time, Jer. xiii. 27. " Jerusalem will not be made clean, when shall it once be ?" 4. Mourns when he hath not this, Ezek. vi. 9. " Broken with their whorish heart." 5. Content to give away any thing for it, all the love of Christ is founded on this. 6. If thou comest not presently, he is content to wait that he may be gracious.

3. It is constant and continual, there is not a moment, thou dost not so oft breath, as thou mayest see and taste love, Isa. xxvii. 3. Isa. lxxv. 2. 1. After all thy whorish departing from God, that if man should do so, no man would own, yet he saith, " Return to me : " thou seest never a creature, but thou hast loved more than Christ, yet return. 2. When God threatens most terribly, and sets his fury on record, yet then there he minds nothing but love, Jer. xxxvi. 2, 3. 3. When none else will own and pity thee thou art so vile, yet Ezek. xvi. 2, 3. the Lord saith, " Live, then is a time of love." 4. Nay, when thou hast cast away thyself as a forlorn creature, yet Hof. xiv. 3. " In thee the fatherless find mercy." 5. When he hath thee in his arms, ready to give thee up, yet then, " How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim," Hof. xi. 8. I tell thee if one sparkle of his eternal blasting displeasure should fall upon thee, it would be so intolerable that it would sink thee ; his love is as strong as death, no water can quench it ; O it is not so with man, or great men, once repulsed is enough : why should the Lord do so here ? many think time is past, it is not so, it is the temptation of them that have time, not of them that want it ; take heed this make thee not despise him.

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4. It is a pure love, others make love for their own ends, but the Lord hath no need of thee, or of thy love: he could raise up of stones children of praise, he could have gone to others, he could have, and can fetch his glory out of thy ruin: he was blessed before all worlds; and by all thy sins thou dost but throw stones against the wind, or snow balls against the sun: why doth he do it? O it is thy good, he pities thee, as once Jerusalem, to look upon thy destruction and desolation: as it is with the elect, they have wrath before their eyes, and hence persuade others, so the Lord Jesus.

S E C T. III.

CONSIDER it is nothing else but love the Lord looks for, or cares for. Love looks for nothing but love, Prov. viii. 17. and this is the end of all election, to be holy before him in love: and mark it if it be a stayed love, that constrains thee to him, you cannot wrong him: As if thou come and persuade one to murder his child, he cannot; so if persuaded to despise, O bowels of heart-breaking love, 2 Cor. v. And surely it is admirable love; what if it were thy goods, thy Isaac to be sacrificed, thy body to be burned, it was nothing; but he desires only love, only thy heart which has forged so much villainy against him: let him never be called upon, or professed, if not worthy of this. After all, is this all? yes, no portion he cares for, and when he has this he has all. Wonder at this O angels!

S E C T. IV.

CONSIDER what he will do for thee, how he will love thee, if thou wilt thus love him.

1. He will set thee next himself in honour, Psalm xlv. 9. that as the Lord Jesus is next to God, sits at
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his right hand; so here, which is an honour that the angels have not; who are no where called Christ's spouse: hence never had such an union, hence never shall partake of that honour of saints.

2. He will enrich thee, as it is with man and wife, all that he has is hers: so himself, and all his glory, his God, his Father, his kingdom is thine, Prov. viii. 21. they that love me inherit something, others nothing: no, nothing indeed, only shews of good, and they find it so when they awake, nothing their own, nothing long: that let thy outward man, yea thy inward be never so poor, thou shalt by him be heir of all.

3. He will counsel thee: hence David, Psalm lxxiii. made choice of God, "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel;" no greater curse than to be left to the guidance of a man's own counsel: but here there shall not be any strait, but the Lord will shew thee a way out of it, either by his prudence or providence; there shall not be any secret of Christ that thou desirest to know, but as Christ told them, "You are my friends," so you are my spouse: hence all his secrets shall be opened to thee: there shall not be one act of thy life, but ordered by infinite prudence, and wisdom and love; sometimes we are befooled in our own counsels, and left to them to teach us to depend on the Lord the more, yet thereby shall come out such good, that it shall be among us as with Joseph's brethren.

4. He will dwell with thee as a man must dwell with his wife, John xiv. 23. that the great mediator that passes by kings and princes, and will not look on them, should come and dwell with thee: this is better than to have the presence of kings, the guard of angels, better than heaven itself, that he should dwell where is nothing worthy to entertain him, only something to grieve him. Now this is,

1. A constant assistance of the Spirit, that let the soul go where he will, be brought to never so low an ebb,

ebb, yet Christ will not out, but some stirrings, sighings, lookings, pantings after Christ; when heart and strength fail, yet God, &c. when ready to give all for lost, then consider as Psal. lxxiii. 2. If he does depart, he will not be long but return again: and those that know his affection, know it so to be, Isa. liv. "For a little moment," &c. so the Lord may depart, and when his presence is a little more esteemed, come again with everlasting mercies: as a man may know many weaknesses by his wife yet she having not bestowed her heart on any other, he will return: so if thou canst say, yet I am the Lord's, he will return.

5. He will rejoice in thee and over thee, Zeph. iii. 17. as a bridegroom does over the bride: Not because of any beauty in thee, for there is none, but because given in marriage of the Father, and for his own sake. This day thou shalt no sooner set thy heart on Christ, but he falls in love with thee, and will take thee with joy; thou thinkest he will be angry if thou closest with him and love him; no, it will be the joy of heaven, of Jesus Christ himself.

6. He will exceedingly comfort thee; and look as it is with tender husbands, then they comfort most when most sorrows betide them; for who could endure his wife should be alway drooping? So even then when nothing doth or can comfort thee, the Lord will, Isa. liv. 6. For the Lord doth not alway comfort, but when in need, as with the patriarchs, then God appeared, when they were at worst; and these are abundant comforts, 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 5. You shall not need to scramble for it as many do, whose hearts do not love Christ in truth as yet.

7. He will put up all wrongs, and bear exceedingly with thee. Many think even when God hath sealed love to them, if any little sin be committed, then they are cast off; no, if under the law so indeed, but when espoused to him, it is not weaknesses, nor wilfulness can make the Lord cast thee away, but he will

heal the one, and afflict thee (yet not cast thee off) for the other, Psal. lxxxix. 33. "My loving-kindness will I never take away." Yea, he will forgive both, Luke vii. 47. "Much forgiven because she loved much." Nay, thy wrongs shall be an occasion to make him love thee more, Rom. v. "Where sin abounds, grace abounds."

8. He will never part with thee, Hos. ii. 19. Once love him, and he will never lose thee.

1. No sin shall part thee and him; for Christ when he enters into marriage-covenant, does not suspend his love on our grace or holiness, then he might leave quickly, but on his own grace to wash away our filthiness, Eph. v. 25, 26. If a husband marries a woman only for so long as she is in health, then when sickness comes he may depart. But *e contra*, if to take away her sicknesses, then they cannot hinder: nothing but adultery can part; now that they cannot do, for nothing breaks, till covenant is broken: And the covenant here is everlasting and so undertaken for by the Lord that it can never be broken.

2. No miseries can, Rom. viii. 35, 36, 37. "Can tribulation?" It makes man leave us, but this is peculiar to Christ, he will not leave.

3. Death cannot, it must part man and wife, though loved never so dearly before, but here not; but then he will come himself and fetch thee, John xiv. 1, 2, 3. take thy soul to the bride-chamber, there to be with him forever and ever, and he will keep the dust of thy blessed body, and not lose one dust of it, and at the last day raise it; and then when others shall cry out, yonder is him whom I have grieved, then shalt thou lift up thy head, yonder comes my husband to comfort me, to crown me, that I may dwell with him. It shall be the blessed day to thee. And when judgment is done, thou shalt go with thy beloved from the air up to heaven with a shout, and live in his love and dearest embracing of thee, and this
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he will do for thee so poor and vile in thine own eyes. Now will you have him? and that now, or no?

S E C T. V.

Object. 1. IF the Lord be so desirous of me, why doth he not overcome me?

Ans. If the Lord doth it, it is by these cords of love, and if not the brand of a reprobate is upon thee.

Object. 2. But I do love him already.

Ans. Is it with such a love as makes you unable to resist him? to wrong him? as the apostle said, "We cannot speak against the truth, but for it;" for if not, it is naught. There is a natural love to Christ, as to one that doth thee good, and for thine own ends; and spiritual for himself, whereby the Lord only is exalted: Hast thou this?

Object. 3. But I do not hate Christ.

Ans. If any man do not love him with a positive love, let him be Anathema.

Object. 4. I cannot love him.

Ans. 1. What canst thou love else? 2. Thou canst not love him so well as thou shouldst, therefore close with him, and love will follow. 3. Get the Lord to overcome thy heart, Jer. iii. 19.

Quest. How shall I do it?

Ans. 1. Set him before thee: "Who will commit lewdness while her husband looks on?" Psal. xvi. 8.

2. See what content thou givest Christ by love: Smallest duties coming from love are accepted. What makes thee wrong him to please thyself? Let a thing cross thee, yet it contents Christ Jesus.

3. Get him, and wait by faith on him to overcome thy heart, and the work is done then. Now will you do this or not? If not, say then you have had a fair offer, and tell the devils so, when thou goest down

down to hell, as it may be thou mayest ere long. Men talk of terrible sermons, but these sink deepest. Tell me, dost thou love the Lord only? Wilt thou keep lusts or Christ alone? If so, then look to it. In this country a woman killed her child, and she said when she did it, her child smiled upon her. Wilt thou kick Christ's love now when he smiles upon thee. Afterward she repented but it was too late. Women when they have a mind to some other, murder their husbands, but if known, burnt they must be. But wilt thou have him and love him alone? O if persuaded to this, then happy forever. Let this day be the beginning of eternal glory to thy soul, and the God of peace be with thee.

C H A P. VII.

Sheweth that a man hath no power in himself to do any spiritual work, but that he must receive all from Christ.

Use 4. **HENCE** we see a necessity, if ever we look to have communion with Christ, to do all spiritual work, all we do (*theologicæ*) from the mighty power of Christ, from the life and spirit of Christ. To bring forth no spiritual act but from Christ, and for Christ, (I shall put both in one, and the latter into the first; for none act truly from him but it is for him) for you know if a woman bring forth children to any other but her own husband, that woman hath lost her chastity: So when men shall bring forth the fruits of obedience to any other, from any other, but from Christ, they lose their virginity, their chastity, without which no communion with Christ. For I have ever made two parts or degrees of christian chastity, (as it is in outward chastity.)

1. The soul sets its chief affections on Christ alone, that look as it is with a woman, though she cannot do

do much, nor deserve his love, yet her heart is with him, herself is his, Cant. vi. 3. "I am my beloved's."

2. The soul brings forth fruits of love, only unto Christ, *i. e.* from Christ and for Christ, as in marriage the woman brings forth fruit of her womb to her husband; and this is set down plainly, Rom. vii. 4. The first we have handled. Now a little of this. And that I may press this which is of much use to you, give me leave to express myself in these conclusions.

S E C T. I.

Concl. 1. **T**HAT all men living nakedly, considered in themselves, have lost all power to do any thing that is good, Rom. iii. 12. "None that doth good."

1. His light is quite extinct, and his eyes quite out: hence said to "sit in darkness and the shadow of death," Matth. iv. 16. now a shadow is a privation of some light, this of all light, hence called darkness itself; take the blindest Indian, he is a witness of this truth, and a right picture of a soul fallen from God: hence because he cannot see he cannot do, 1 Cor. ii. 14.

2. All that life he had to act well, is lost too, Eph. ii. 1. he is dead in trespasses and sins: he cannot breath, nor speak, nor think, nor do one thing that is good: I say nakedly considered in himself. And hence look upon a man quite forsaken of God in hell, there you may see as in a lively looking-glass what every man living is when the Lord leaves him: he can blaspheme, he cannot love him, he can contemn God, he cannot esteem him: he can wish there were no God to punish him: he cannot submit unto God though he leaves the most heavy load upon him, and you see not yourselves until you see yourselves here, and see yourselves thus.

S E C T. II.

Concl. 2. **T**HAT unto some men especially, nay unto all men almost, though vile, yet more or less the Lord gives a power to act, and live, and move, and to do many spiritual duties, or good duties from themselves. For as there is a breadth in the ways of grace, that every christian hath not the like measure of grace, so there is a breadth or latitude in the ways of sin: every sinner breaks not forth into the like measure of sin, but some are far better than others; as the three grounds that were bad, yet one better than another. Now how comes this about? why, the Lord gives that power to act (as all the knowledge of a God) by the light of nature (falsely so called) this is the work of God, Rom. i. 19. Hence all terrors, and comforts, and duties of conscience, are all from God: so the historical faith of the gospel which many have, and so to confess and profess no salvation but by Christ, together with a readiness to die in defence of this truth and religion, and joy from this, and reformation of life upon this, none of these are natural to this soil of a man's soul, but all are planted there by God, 1 Cor. xii. 2, 3. and so that man can act according to the law, be strict in Sabbaths, frequent in fastings and prayers, &c. it is from God, Rom. x. 2. And why doth the Lord work this? it is else no living in the world among men, and because Christ is the *politicum caput*, and hath bought all men in the world to be his servants, hence gives them gifts which he turns for the good of his people: but yet this is the nature of all these abilities, that a man acts from the strength and power of them, not from Christ, Mic. iv. 5. Other nations "will walk in the name," &c. and the reason is,

1. Because every man is under the guidance either of the first or second covenant, and power of either:

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now as the power of the second covenant is to draw a man out of himself to another, and so to make him act from another: so the power of the first is to drive a man into himself by terrors, and fears, and hopes, and rewards, and so to enable him to act from himself; hence it is impossible but they must act ever from themselves.

And 2. Because though many good gifts, and moral virtues, may be said to be supernatural, *i. e.* above the power of nature to work, yet never above the improvement of nature: for let God work never so many good things in man, nature, *i. e.* an ill stomach, when diseased, is strongest, there nature turns all into the humour, and so a man dies at last; so the power of sin in nature being more powerful than any grace which by common work is given it, ever turns that grace into itself, and leads it into captivity, bondage, and service of itself; so that there is never a grace but it is made to serve some lust, as in Jehu, in Judas, &c. and God complains, Isa. xliii. 24. So this I say is the case of thousands unregenerate, who can do many good things, but from themselves, which God hath wrought to: and hence many a child of God hath been long hindered from conversion, and others not converted at all, because they have thought wicked men whom God minds to damn, are such as have no good, nor do no good, or if they do they have it not from God; but it is not so with me, for I have and do many good things, which I acknowledge come from God, and I thank God I am not as other men. Now mark, it is true, nakedly considered, no good could come from unregenerate men, but yet the Lord gives power to many to do; so the Lord has done to thee, and thou hast been thankful for it. And this is common, many account themselves great sinners, but yet they can believe: many say they can do little, but their desire and will at worst is to do: tell them these are not right, unless they come from
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the Lord; they will say the Lord doth all, and they acknowledge it, and so I believe, and it is true; but it is not such a work of the Lord as is peculiar to the elect, because when the Lord hath wrought these, you act only from them, and hence never feel a want of these, for the Lord never yet wrought any grace in his people, but after they have had it, and tasted of it, he hath more or less deserted them, and so hath made them feel a want of it, and made them fetch it again with sighs, and groans, and tears; now it hath never been so with thee.

S E C T. III.

Concl. 3. THAT it is most pleasing to man, and agreeable to his nature to act only from himself: As it was with the prodigal, he desired his stock in his own hands, and while any thing lasted, he would never come home; and hence those, John vi. 28. What shall we do to work the works of God: and when Christ spake of faith, they were stumbled there, inasmuch that divers did forsake him.

1. Because man's acting from himself is best able to attain his own ends, to which you know a man is gently and necessarily carried: for no man out of Christ, but his own ends draw him; now Christ crosseth a man's own ends, and to live on him is to live on him that will confound them of their own ends, or else no life there: Hence they live from themselves. As it is with a crafts-man, or artificer, propounding the gain or credit they may get by being excellent in their trade, may by their own study and frequency of acts, grow dexterous, and very skilful at last, and hence delight in it; so here, profession and practice of religion may be a man's trade which he may drive for his own ends and gain, and hence may desire to be excellent, and by endeavour be excellent, and profit exceedingly in many

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many excellent endowments: hence he acts and works for himself, Rom. i. 14.

2. Because a man naturally knows not how to fetch it from Christ from heaven, Rom. x. iii. Hence it is with them as with a child cast off by the Father, and put to some hard master, because they have no father to maintain them, they must live as they are, and do as well as they can. A man comes to pray, knows not how to fetch strength from Christ, and he must pray, and hence prays as well as he can.

3. Because it is so hard a thing to live upon another, it is easy and sweet to a spiritual heart, but most difficult to any carnal heart, John vi. Christ tells them they must eat his flesh, they say, "Who can then be saved?" and many departed. Men had rather make holes, and keep water in their house, than have it far to fetch, and when they come to fetch it, to bestow such strength in drawing of it.

4. Because every man thinks he loves and cares for himself best, and sees no God, nor Christ caring for or loving of him more than himself; Hence a man plots for himself, and lives for himself, and all from himself. As when Joseph's brethren saw their brother, then they came down and lived upon him; before they came to him indeed, but with their money, to live of themselves. And thus it was with the young man, "Sell all and have riches in heaven:" No, he loved himself; and cared for himself better than so; hence would not commit and give away all to Christ.

5. Because whatever a man does from himself, either it is good, or he thinks it so, or hopes if not, God will accept it. Some evil in it perhaps, but he hath his allowances which will make it go, some good desires or faith in Christ, and hence hopes if not thinks God will accept of what comes from himself. As, Prov. xxi. 2. "All a man's ways are right in his own eyes." And truly nature and satan have ever been imitators and apes of God, to forge and

make grace like true grace, hence deceived. This being pleasing to men, is the practice of most men, yea, all men out of Christ. And this is one of the great part of the inward, secret, subtil, spiritual whoredom of the soul. Thus men may sorrow, when yet there is little true sorrow, and so in other cases.

S E C T. VII.

Concl. 4. **T**HAT all these works, though good in themselves, yet are most vile before the Lord; as Christ speaks of the Pharisees, it is abomination in the sight of God, which is glorious before man, Luke xvi. 15.

1. Because hereby the soul deprives Christ of the end of his coming; for all men having lost the stock and power to live, the Lord hence will trust no man with it again; hence puts it into a surer and better hand, that thither poor, blind, dead creatures might fly for life, and when they are there, live there like bees on their honey, John vi. 27. and xvii. 23. He might never have looked after you, and will you despise him now? What folly and unkindness is this, that when your pits are dry, and bottles empty, and souls miserable here, you will not (I do not say sip) when water runs by your door, but not live.

2. Because whatever comes from self, it is ever for self. A man can do nothing from himself, but his last end is self. As it is with water works, they rise no higher than the spring, Gen xi. 4. "This Babel "I have built," Dan. iv. 30. And a man that has but common grace, look as by virtue of that grace, or gift of God, he may act for God, because it came from God; so nature and sin being more powerful than that grace, hence he never so acts for God, but in the last place acts for itself as in Jehu: And so a man makes himself his own god.

3. Because whatever a man does from himself, he will

will grow proud of it, Rom. iv. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Hence Joab sent to David to take the city that he might have the crown. This robs Christ of the glory.

4. Because whatever work is not done by virtue of the Lord Jesus, is a dead work, which a living God and a living Christ, and a living Spirit loath, Heb. ix. 14. "Sprinkle your consciences from dead works." Deadly works are sins, dead works are good works done, but not from the principle of the life of faith, but life of nature. Now as conscience is the principle of the life of nature, so Christ is the principle of a christian life, Col. iii. 1 John v. 10, 11, 12. For it is not sanctification that is the principle of life, but the life itself that flows from it as from union of soul and body, the soul is not the life but the principle of it, hence as soon as it is out, the body is dead: So, &c. And do you not find it thus, whenas you do many duties, how tedious, wearisome are they? yet must be done, this is a dead work. What comfort, what peace is there, when you have done them? because not from life.

5. Because what comes from self, comes from all sin, it is dipt and died, and tainted and poisoned with all sin in a manner. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"

6. Because when a man will act from himself, and not suffer Christ to act for him, he will not have Christ to reign over him, he pulls down the kingdom of God that should be within him. For when a man professeth Christ is king of his church, he is now a king in name: When a man feels an impossibility to rule himself, and hence desireth and chuseth Christ to rule, now Christ is a king by choice: When the soul after this choice, depends on Christ for what he chose him for, and the Lord works, now Christ is a king indeed. Now if you will not have the Lord to reign over you, you will be found enemies to the Lord's kingdom.

S E C T V.

Concl. 5. **HENCE** it will follow, The soul is to act wholly and only from the Lord Jesus Christ, and whatever fruits of love it shews to Christ, to bring them forth from Christ. Which doth not only concern them that never yet knew Christ, and yet pride up themselves in what they have and do, but those that be in Christ in a special manner. For John xv. 2. "Every branch in me that brings not forth fruit." It is not meant of one indeed in Christ, for he shall bring forth fruit; but every branch, *i. e.* by outward profession, so that it brings not forth fruit, but appears fair, and deceives man, God will cast away: And without me even ye disciples can do nothing.

Quest. 1. *How is the soul to act from Christ only, when it hath life, especially the elect?*

Quest. 2. *By what means may this be done, to get and keep this chastity?*

Quest. 1. *How is the soul to act from Christ alone when there is sanctification within?*

Ans. 1. If the soul feel no power to act from grace received, as saints sometimes do either after God's deserting them, or their forsaking God long, or after some hardening sin; then it is clear the soul in this case is (though not in a way of carelessness) to depend upon the Lord Jesus, that he would quicken and help. As David after his gross fall, "Lord create in me a clean heart. And Isa. lxiii. 17. "Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear? O return!" In this case the soul is not to bring the soul to God, but God to the soul. As many a christian cannot prize nor love the Lord nor his ways, he is not to say, I will bring my soul and offer it him; but look to the Lord that he would raise my dead affections again. As the centurion of his servant, "speak the word," &c. Christ marvelled at his faith. Men think when they feel nothing

nothing, that they must and can work it out; and hence comes one of these three things,

1. Either the soul cannot love Christ when it sees such laws it cannot submit to. And hence a christian once said to me, If the least thing was left for me to do of myself, I could not love Christ; but now that when brought low and can do nothing, he brings all the help we need. This makes the spouse go to the bosom of her husband, Psal. cxvi. 6, 7. Or else,

2. It cannot do it, for corruptions in a saint is too hard for his grace, "I am but a child, and thy people many," 1 Kings iii. 7. Hence he must be strong in the Lord.

Or 3. If it do, it never has any peace in what it does, the duties never so well done. Whereas otherwise the poorest duty done from Christ, witness Heb. xi. 4, 5. as a child begot of the Father, he will own, but other children not. If any poor tired heart that hears me this day, thou hast been making thy brick, and promises and vows will not help, now away to the Lord, if ever help now it is when most helpless.

2. If you can do any thing savingly good, the soul is bound now (by the power of faith) to stir up itself to act, though not to trust to it alone, for sometimes the soul hath the regenerate part uppermost, and the prevailing Spirit of God, Psal. xxi. 3. which comes to him, and gives it power to act before the soul come to it. Now a man is bound to act, because it is from Christ now. Hence Timothy was to "stir up the gift," 2 Tim. i. 6. Hence complained of them, Isa. lxiv. 8. "None stirs up himself to take hold on the Lord." A man must stir up himself to believe, as well as other graces, hence "the kingdom of heaven is taken with violence," and though corruption is stronger than grace, yet grace assisted with the Spirit, is stronger than it, which is never quite out of the soul, but it is in the soul, 1 John iv. 4. "Stronger is he that is in you." And it

it is said professedly, "He purgeth himself, and
 "keepeth himself, the evil one toucheth him not,"
 1 John v. 18. But mark, trust not barely to this,
 but when you do this, withal remember, Lord I can-
 not hold out in this, unless thou dost help me: But
 know, Isa. xxvi. "The Lord is the rock of my
 "strength." And "if you by the Spirit mortify,"
 &c. Rom. viii. 13. Therefore ever hold up sails, but
 look for a wind. And if a man be not to do this,
 then when any sinful temptation comes, if a man do
 not find the Spirit and strength ready at hand to help,
 if he be not to stir up himself against it, he is to suf-
 fer himself to be carried down by it. Hence a man
 may neglect all duties a long time, if he do not find
 the Spirit assisting, if so be a man must not stir himself
 up, and so (will some say) a man may. May? what
 shall I say to such a sluggish soul, but sleep on? But
 know it, the Lord will awaken thee, when you shall
 say, O that I had improved the talent I had! And
 if you do find Christ in such a condition, know it
 they be but the last visits of Christ before he departs.
 You can do more than you do, and the Lord will
 have you do it.

Object. But I cannot do it for good ends without
 Christ.

Ans. Yet do the things as far as you can, else if
 you owe another a debt, and will not pay, because
 not for a good end, that excuse will not serve: So
 you owe the Lord your lives, your spirits, your abi-
 lities; lay them out for the Lord, though evil be in
 them, be humbled for that. Is this good requital
 to say you find your hearts dead in prayer, and God
 must do all, and there leave it?

3. You are to expect and look for power from the
 Lord Jesus in the use of means, all known means:
 For faith fetches all from Christ, hence we must go
 thither where Christ is to be found, and he dwells in
 his house, in his ordinances: Therefore there you
 must

must depend upon him. As it is with a merchant, he wades not over the sea for pearls, but gets into his shop, and there he sits still; so here, Matth. xiii. "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant man." Hence you that know you can do nothing, being under a spirit of conviction, and hence do nothing, under a spirit of sloth and neglect of means, by virtue of a spirit of presumption, and say, Christ must do all, I say you take not the right course for the Lord to help you in. The Lord will never be a slave to thy sloth, but thou shalt be like a shrub, never to see good when it comes, and shalt die in horror with this, O I might have done more! Hence you are worse than the other, that think if a man fasts, prays, watches against his distempers, mourns for want of Christ and grace, and follows God hard here, he is a legal christian: Why, these are but his own works, and this is not living on Christ. I confess bare using them, or trusting to them is not, but he that lives not on Christ in use of means, (these and all other means) to find Christ, or enjoy more of Christ, shall never have him. Neither do I know what turning God's grace into wantonness is, if this be not; and under a liberty to be a servant of corruption. I know not whether it be thus with any, but if I did, I would pity them.

4. If the soul cannot every moment live on Christ, *i. e.* for every particular act, have a distinct act of faith, for this cannot be, yet every fit season that it can, it ought to look up to the Lord for life and fresh strength. Pray as it is every fit season. And as he brings forth fruit, so he goes for fruit in season, Psal. i. 3. And when the soul does this, the Spirit of the Lord helps, when the act is ceased.

Now the fit seasons are,

1. At beginning of any action, as prayer, hearing, reading: All the time a man is in his journey, or in his work, he is carried on by the act of faith at first

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setting out: The reach of faith is long, and continues all prayers, all the duty throughout, the act of faith is short: Now the Lord looks to his people according to the first.

2. When our act begins to die, as Moses lifted up his hands, and when they were heavy, Aaron and Hur supported them again.

3. When a man feels himself strong, now apt to be self-confident; now Lord for an humble heart! And thus you are to live on Christ, which if done, would make a christian's life glorious, and give infinite content to the heart of Christ. But here is the misery, either the hearts are full and need not, or slothful, and care not for living so. That truly I do not wonder to hear and see so many withering trees, as though blasted by wrath, because you fetch not all out of this stock; and Christ is such a stranger, because you are so seldom with him to act and bring forth fruit to him.

S E C T. VI.

CONSIDER of the means to act from Christ Jesus, and indeed herein lies the skill and life of a christian, and this is the complaint of many a soul, Christ is full, and he is not for himself, but for those that want, and I come to him when I want it, and yet I find no help; and hence many are brought to think either it is in vain to come to Christ, or else I have no faith in Christ; I will therefore premise these three things.

1. That a false, double, treacherous, disloyal heart to Christ cannot expect any thing it comes for unto Christ. As it is with a woman, that though others do not, yet her husband knows she is fallen in league with some other man, he will be strange to her, and will not do any thing for her, John ii. *ult.* "He knew what was in man;" as it is in grafts,

James

James i. 7, 8. Let not a double minded man think to receive any thing at the hands of the Lord For that is the nature of man under the power of any lust, it makes all serve it, even Christ himself, which he will never do, "I am weary of your new moons," saith the Lord, and you fast, and pray, and have no answer, for you fast for debate: and therefore I take a man considered as broken off from the power of lusts, not one that feels himself under the power of it, for such a one may be delivered from it, such a soul as can say, much ado have I to feel my sin, and to be willing to part with it, but now I am; here is the soul I speak of.

2. That the Lord in the dispensation of grace to his people, is wholly free to give it when he will: for a man that works for his wages, must in justice have his wages when his work is done: but he that begs for his living must be content to stay. We live by faith, and free gift, not by works and deserts, and hence must wait and stay, Mic. vii. 7. Hence let any man think sensibly to receive what he goes for to the Lord Jesus presently, as many feel a want of grace, and think the Lord hath promised to help, and now how would it make for his honour to give, but find it not, and hence grow sad or discouraged, and think it is in vain to seek? no, no; Christ's hour is not yet come, when you think it is, John ii. "My hour is not yet come;" and hence many get nothing because they lie out of the way of the covenant, viz. to think, O the Lord owes me nothing, and I deserve the contrary.

3. That no man is to look to receive all that which he comes to the Lord for, but only so much as is fit for him: a man may feel much straitness, and he would have many enlargements; he finds much deadness, and he would have deep overflowing affections, and he comes to the Lord for it, and the Lord gives some; doth he not? do you not find it?

can you say you seek the Lord, and attend on the Lord in vain with these hypocrites? Matth. iii. 14. True, but yet methinks more would be better. How do you know that? I think so, that it would be more for his honour: You think so, then it seems you have one eye more than Christ, and that he is very careless and foolish in raising his own honour: O abhor those thoughts, he gives you such a coat as is fit for you, such a sail as fits your boat, such shoes as fit your feet, Psal. xxi. 5. "Honour and majesty hast thou fitted for him:" therefore do not look to receive any more than is fit for you, and know it, that is best for you. The physician prescribes that which is fit, not that which is most desired of the patients: if he will not accept of this, he will not look after them, 1 Cor. xii. 7, 8.

4. Think not to get any thing from the Lord Jesus with ease, I mean to the fleshly part: it hath been an old complaint, I go to Christ, and fish all night, and can catch nothing: and why? here is the cause, they cannot get it easily, and therefore they cannot get it at all, yea there it is, Heb. xi. 6. This is one of the two main handles of faith, "He is rewarder of all them that diligently seek him," not negligently: and hence at their first conversion how doth Christ's fruits overflow, and his Jordan rise above its banks! and what a deal does a christian gain, yet not afterward! so in time of great trouble, O it is because you seek him diligently: Therefore in prescribing means, do not say this is hard, and so depart as those did on the very same ground, John vi. 60.

S E C T. VII.

The means are these,

Means 1. **L**ABOUR for a comprehending knowledge, what is the love of Christ to thee: there is a double knowledge of Christ's love. 1. That

1. That he loves me, and this very apprehension fetches in warmth and life into the heart, "In thy favour is life."

2. What that love is, and that in all the dimensions of it: and beloved, this is that which fills a man, Eph. iii. 18, 19. that as it is with women when the fulness of the husband's love is seen, it knits the heart invincibly to him, and makes her do any thing for him so here. And as we say of trees, if the tree begins to wither and die, the only way is not to cast water on the branches, to pray for water and dews from heaven on them, but water the root. Love is the next root of all grace, love Christ, and you will never be weary of doing for Christ, love him, and he will love you, Prov. viii. 17. Now what kindles love so much as this comprehending knowledge of the Lord Jesus, and his love, this will make a man a burning beacon of love, make a man melt into love, which is as strong as death, much water cannot quench it, 2 Cor. v. 14. "Love of Christ constrains," Gal. v. 6. "Faith works by love:" Faith is our feet whereby we come to Christ, love is our hand whereby we work for Christ: now let any chirurgeon's servant come to a chirurgeon with a broken arm, and tell him he can do no work for him, therefore desire him to give strength to do it, come faith he, let me heal your arm first: no, by no means; let me first do your work, that so you may heal, and I may feel my arm to be whole: It can never be. So it is many a christian's course, Lord let me do thy work, and hence he cries, Lord give me strength, and then falls to do it, and cannot without pain, because his love is broken. Many say, I will go to Christ, and act for Christ, and then I will think the Lord loves me, but never find it: first see and comprehend the love of the Lord: And truly this is the reason why no heart, no strength to act for God, unless it be in a wearisome manner; and why? O love is out; and why is that out? why, it is not comprehend-
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ed by the eye of faith, it is despised by some, other things are sweet to them, or it is forgotten by others; men remember not what once they were, and what the Lord has done; it is seen a little, and hence a little life and strength, but it is comprehended by few. O sinful times! O unkind world! never was my heart so dead faith one, never so straitened and shut up faith another, never so feeble in all duties faith another: why, you see, and taste, and sip of this love, but you feed not heartily, abundantly on it. Never didst thou think so little of this love; for though Christ will convey rich grace to his people, yet it shall be by love. Christians will come to Christ, and when they receive and feel the good they come for, they will think of Christ's love, and that he loves them, no, first come unto the Lord Jesus, being once come, know he will not cast thee away, John vi. 37. then think of this love; stay here, first feed here, and you may act, and then the Lord will convey strength and power, and enable you hereunto: For though when a man trusts to his love, as Peter without faith, a man will fall because he trusts to an arm of flesh: yet when faith employs love, the work is very great. As a father has a child who must keep at home with him, but he has never a steward to lay out that estate for him that he means to give him, but when an able steward, now he gives his son richly. So here:

Quest. How shall I comprehend it?

Ans. First, the apostle prays for it. Secondly, see what it is, by his description, and meditate on it.

1. The breadth, *i. e.* the same love wherewith the Lord comprehends all saints, as Abraham, &c. thou art as dear to the Lord as he or any in heaven; nay, it may be did cost more: not a cross, not a mercy, but it is common (for substance) unto all saints.

2. The length, from eternity to eternity, nothing can part, nothing shall part; all other things are but summer swallows that build with us for a time.

3. The

3. The depth, that the Lord should look upon thee when in thy pest-house, when no eye pitied thee, when as low as the grave, nay, as low as hell, nay lower; for they in hell would come out, thou wouldst not. Never think to see what infinite love is, till thou see infinite wrath.

4. The height, to be as happy as angels, and more so, nay to be all one with Christ, and in Christ, and loved with the same love Christ is, John xvii. 23, 26.

5. When thou see it thus, yet it is the love of Christ that passeth knowledge: As children cannot tell how parents love them, will you do thus? It is with many christians as it is with many trees, the tree is good, and the soil is good, and rain, dews, sun, husband-man good, yet it begins to die, then now nothing is wanting, but only to be set a little deeper, that it may take more root of the soil. And so here, there is nothing wanting in many a christian, but to be set a little deeper, and to take more rooting in the Lord's love. Faith roots itself in God's love, and now prospers by love. The eye is but little, yet can comprehend a mighty world quickly: man's mind is but little, yet can comprehend, though not the infiniteness, yet an infinite. If there be this light of glory, see by it all your poor sad hearts that conceive nothing but terror and holiness in God; if you see it not, know it here is your work now; for the first work is to get faith, then to get love, then to act from faith by love. Now the Lord hath wrought the first, and thou art busy a doing the third work, not remembering the second.

Means 2. Content not thyself with feeling a want of supply, but labour to feel a need of supply from the Lord Jesus; for many a christian feels a want of grace from Christ, brokenness, &c. sees he has nothing, and is sometime by fits troubled for the want of it: but he can be well content though he have no supply, having

having somewhat else to ease and content him, he feels no need of supply, so as he cannot be without it, that his spirit fails unless the Lord Jesus in mercy give it, and therefore must have it, there is a necessity of it. Hence he never finds supply, and wonders at it why it is so: and here it is, here is his wound, and so brings up an ill report of the Lord, saying, he is loth to give; and of the ordinances of the Lord, it is in vain to seek, and truly so it is to seek so: for let thy condition be never so miserable, if thou feelest a need of supply, the Lord will make bare his arm, and work wonders, bring heaven out of hell, joy out of sorrow, and light out of the thickest darkness, and floods out of dry ground, Isa. xlv. 17, 18. when the ground is dry and parched, no moisture left; now the Lord pours out water on this soul, Isa. xlv. 3. Heb. iv. ult. Many come to the Lord for grace, and find it not: methinks I hear the Lord speaking thus to his people, I love you dearly, and I am content to give you any thing you need, but you do not need my grace, my Spirit, my presence, *i. e.* you feel not a need of it, for if you had it now, you would not prize it much, nor keep it long: my precious grace must not be spilt. Many know their wants and distempers, and know there is no help in themselves, and see all fulness in Christ, and hence comes to him, but find none, because they can be content though the Lord deny: no nor never shall unless you feel the woe of your wants, that your spirit fails if the Lord send not in supply, Isa. lvii. 16. "I will not contend, lest the Spirit fail." Hence there God promiseth to dwell, to send and create peace and comfort: for what is the reason that christians at first beginnings seek peace and mercy, and have abundantly then? why truly I was long time before I had any thing, but when my spirit began to fail, and I gave all for gone and could out no more, now the Lord helped and pitied me: but where are those comforts, and that presence of the Lord

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Lord now? Truly now you think the worst is past, and would be glad of the life of Christ, and grace from Christ, but if not, you have a little, your state is safe, and so can lie without putting yourself to a necessity of it. Is it not thus? is not this your very wound? if it be, for the Lord's sake then get it healed, and do as people in Christ's time, those that were well, and had not desperate diseases, commonly came not to him, but when the disease was desperate, you know the fame of Christ being spread abroad, then they brought their sick, and laid them before his merciful eyes, then they looked for the laying on of his hand, or a word of his mouth, and all were healed: so do you, you have heard of the fame of Christ and seen others humbled, others pardoned, lay thy sick soul (but look that it be sick) before his eyes, and so look for one word of his mouth, as the woman of Canaan, he may deny for a time, yet she must have it, and the Lord will say, "Be it unto thee according to thy faith," not according to thy deserts, thou wilt have it, I must give it, thou diest without it, behold I live to revive thee, and therefore to give it. You come to prayer, and word, and want many things, but find them not. Oh come therefore, Lord, I must have, I cannot do without supply. Not but that a christian must wait, and be content humbly, but not carelessly: Therefore think within thyself,

1. What is there that I need but this, the presence of God, the life of God, &c. Is it not enough in heaven, where is no wealth nor comforts else? and is it not sufficient now?

2. May I have it on this condition, (I must have it, I am resolved not to go without it) Rev. xxii. 17. if you will come, take it. Are the terms so sweet?

3. Do wicked men thirst more and more after their lusts, and is Christ, and his grace, and his presence no better,

better, that I have enough of them quickly? God forbid there should be such a heart.

4. Doth the least sin so exceedingly go to the heart of my God, and shall I suffer it not only to act here, and tempt here, but remain alive here?

5. Is not the Lord, after all love shewn me, worthy of infinite (not a little) honour from me? and doth he deserve all, and must I not, shall I not give it him before I die? it must, it shall be so. Now when here you feel a need, know it that you are at the very door of relief: I conceive this is the great door at which Christ enters into the soul. The root of faith (*i. e.* the author, object, and foundation of faith) is out of a man's self, the door of faith which opens to all treasures is in a man's self: This door is not any good in us, for then we should have somewhat to boast of; nor sin in us, for that shuts out God from us; nor knowledge of want, for that the devils have, but sense of want, which when the saints have, now the door is opened for the Lord Jesus in all his fulness to come in. Now "if you know these things, blessed " are you if you do them."

S E C T. VIII.

Use 5. TO all the churches of the Lord Jesus here planted in these western parts of the world, to maintain your church chastity and virginity, you have a name of it abroad, pure chaste virgin-churches, not polluted with the mixtures of mens inventions, not defiled with the company of evil men: pure ordinances, pure people, pure churches, which is the cause of the scoffs and enmity of some, but of the desire and joy of others. O if there, how happy I? and how blessed they? Take heed you do not defile yourselves again. Open whoredom is too gross, too shameful, to yield to man's inventions, to open the door for all comers into the church: but take heed of secret whoredoms and departings from Christ; for think of this speech
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when you see me dead, that of all churches in the world, the Lord Jesus carries a most jealous eye over these for whom he has done such great things; and I know it, he takes exceeding ill your secret wantonness and whoredoms of heart; the Lord has kept you hitherto, look you maintain it, for you may be soon deflowered again; few churches retain their purity long; aged, grey-haired purity is seldom seen. I will tell you of the several temptations (some at least) that may prevail to the defilement of you.

First, Spiritual defilement is forsaking of the husband, a total secret forsaking of Christ; for here is the temptation to it, viz. God's withdrawing himself in his ordinances from his ordinances. For three sorts of temptations make men fall back.

1. By persecution; and there many fall (tho' some hold out) as in the stony land.

2. By peace; and here many fall like the thorny ground; like sailors that in a storm at sea, every man is ready, and will be pulling his rope, but when a calm, then go to their cabins, and there fall asleep, and here many fall in this place, and others stand it out.

3. By the Lord's withdrawing from them, as those, Mal. iii. 14. and here the great ones fall. Many come to enjoy ordinances, and persecution vexed them not, the world is base, it troubles them not, and they think to find much, but do not, but the Lord withdraws, and they can get no good; hereupon their false hearts discover themselves, they draw back from God, and lie still, whereas saints cry the more into themselves, and find out the cause of it, and then the Lord helps them, Isa. lxiii. 17. Oh take heed of this.

1. Shall I forsake the Lord that has done these great things for my soul?

2. Shall I now do it after I am so near heaven?

3. Shall I forsake him when he departs from me but for a time it may be, when as he followed me, when I departed long from him?

4. Is it not hell to die without him? and shall it not be death to live without him?

5. Does he depart without a cause, he has no cause to follow me, I have all reason to follow him; the Lord grant you may do so.

Secondly, Secret defilement is by neglect of private communion with him: this is whorish in a wife. Here is stronger temptation to neglect private prayer and meditation, partly by want of room, partly by multitudes of busineses, and work, and cares hereabout, that being weary in the day, sleepy at night, busy in the morning prayer, meditation, daily examination are sent away as Paul from Felix, we will speak with these at some more convenient season; and hence straitness of heart toward Christ, and no means do good. O beloved, have you such a husband as Christ in heaven, that loves thy looks, thy company, thy sighs, thy speeches, and will you neglect him thus? what no love? 2. Is he not broken with this whorish heart? 3. Is that speech worth any thing with you, "We shall ever be with the Lord," doth it comfort you to think of being ever with him, and now neglect him? where are your hearts?

Thirdly, Secret defilement is by bringing other lovers into the same bed, the same heart with him: and here the temptation to this is strong, for most men have lost and sunk in their estates, and it is hard to live lower than we did, and this is a grief, and here grief for loss has a vent by greediness and pursuit after more. In other places men had a very comfortable estate, hence rejoiced in what they had, and did not greedily desire more; but now want makes men hungry and greedy: and now when a man has thought and looked about him, and seen what he may gain by his labour of many acres, by his goats and cattle in so many years; now he casts himself into the world, and also will not forsake Christ utterly, but bring both into the same heart, Christ shall have some love, some
 . desire,

desire, but the world as much, and so the heart is divided; and hence some set high prices on their corn, commodities, cattle, others look for large wages, &c. and yet Christ too. Hence men cry out of the world because it hinders them from Christ, and yet bring it into, and hug it in their hearts, because they must have it in the bed with Christ. It was the speech of one, that he never heard of any saint in scripture given to covetousness, some to one sin, some to another, but none to that; I have heard of Lot, but God fired him out of his estate at last; and that is all I would say to this.

Fourthly, Secret defilements is by decaying in love to those whom Christ loves, and those are his saints, and temptations is strong in this place to this: 1. Because we have multitudes of them; even gold itself being so common as to pave our streets, is despised. 2. Because there wants a common enemy to drive them together. Take several men that never knew one another, yet in time of war they will love abundantly, and then encourage one another, and can with joy lie together; so it is here, hence arise your petty duels and jars in churches, surmising, censurings, &c. and the reason is this, there is little love to saints, and for want of this, men shall not know whether you be Christ's disciples or no. Be thy brethren saints or not? bear they the image of Christ or no? if they do not, why not convince them, admonish them? and if they will not be better, away with them; if they be, O bear, O love, O tender them, as thou lookest the Lord Jesus should tender thee. And therefore let the image of Christ appear, and then see it, and then love, and then no more breaches will follow: if not, the Lord can and will soon send wolves to make sheep run more together.

Fifthly, Letting a new generation of harlots into Christ's bosom, I mean, not greatly caring for posterity, that they may know and serve this God; for after

ter this generation is past, our children are to follow, and it is very rare that they prove right, yet it may be so. Hearken therefore you parents, if God brought them over for this end, and if they never knew God, what a sad thing it would be? or if they be brought forth to pull down the temple of God. O therefore, 1. Be careful of a pious education of them in schools, in private, and take some course for that end before others come over, this will draw them. 2. O make many prayers for them. 3. Set faith a-work in God's promise; as he said he would not abate the Lord, (though he gave it him in ninety-nine) of that one. Leave in record what the Lord has done for you, that the Lord may be with them, and that all these churches may be the glory of Christ, and then you shall enter into the bride-chamber of the Lamb at last.

CHAP. VII. SECT. I.

Concerning a Christian's duty of being constantly and continually ready to meet Christ, and to enjoy communion with him.

2. Took their lamps.

MUCH dust is raised, and much dispute is made, especially by popish interpreters, what the lamps, what the oil, what the vessels should be? The general conceit of most of them is: that by oil is meant good works, and by lamps faith answerable to their own conceit, that not faith but good works chiefly save: Whereas if we consider the thing rather *e contra*, that by lighted lamps are meant good works, or eternal shining profession, according to that of Christ, Mat. v. "Let your light so shine before men," &c. and that by oil should be meant faith; because it is inward,
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and is the nourishment of works and outward profession. And in this sense some of our divines do take this scripture; and the rhemists likewise, who understand by lamps lighted, good works; by oil a good intention: To which it is answered by Cartwright, (that burning and shining light of our times) that rather by lamps lighted is to be understood, "watchful minds" "alway lifted up in attending for the coming of Christ," according as it is ver. 13. And I doubt not but this is one thing aimed at, that they "took their lamps," *i. e.* were watchful for Christ's coming. But when I weigh other circumstances, methinks there is somewhat else more plainly and principally intended, of which I scarce read any divine, but he gives a hint of, viz. that by lighted lamps, and taking of them, is meant nothing else but the readiness of the churches to meet and to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus. And my reasons are these:

Because the Lord Jesus to teach his people watchfulness, and to put them to a narrow search of themselves, borrows a similitude from the custom of those times, wherein their marriages were celebrated in the night, and hence the virgins (the only children of the bride chamber, and some think their number never exceeded ten) being to walk out in the night, took their lamps: and when they had kindled their lamps, (usually the last thing that is done) now they are ready to go out, and this is that which Christ aims at.

2. From Luke xii. 35. "Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning;" it is evident that thereby is meant nothing else but readiness to meet the Lord whenever he comes; for when loins are girt, then one is fit for travel, but seeing it is in the night hence lamps must be burning too.

3. Because it is said plainly, ver 10. when their lamps were kindled again, "they that were ready went in;" I know the word is called a lamp for our feet,

feet, Psal. cxix. and so by lamps may be meant minds enlightened and kindled by the word. The eminent profession and excellencies of the church is like a lamp, Isa. lxii. 1. and more particularly may be here included and aimed at: but in this verse lamps are spoken of in general, including light, oil, vessels; and hence I give this general interpretation here, intending particulars if need be afterward: So that now shall only raise this point.

S E C T. II.

Doct. THAT all those that are espoused unto Christ, ought to be in a constant or continual readiness to meet Christ, and to have immediate communion with Christ.

A woman may be espoused to another, and yet she may be sometimes not ready to meet him, her foul apparel is on. So here, therefore it is not enough to be espoused unto Christ, but being espoused, now you ought to be in a continual readiness to clasp the Lord in your arms, and to lay your heads in his bosom in heaven: This is commanded by Christ, Mat. xxiv. 44. This was the mighty power of God's grace in Paul, when others were weeping to think of his bonds, "Why do you break my heart, I am ready not only to be bound, but to die for Christ," and so doubtless to be with Christ; much more ready to meet Christ whenever he shall come, ready to welcome death, much more ready to welcome Christ, Acts xxi. 13. This also is the end of John's ministry, Luke i. 17. To make ready a people prepared for the Lord, to meet with Christ on earth; now he is gone, our work is to prepare a people to meet the Lord in heaven. Hence this is put in as the difference between vessels of wrath, and vessels of glory: the one are fitted for destruction, the others are fitted, prepared, or made ready for glory, and the glory of

a christian is chiefly to enjoy fellowship immediately with Jesus Christ. There is many a soul dear unto Christ, and espoused to him, and has his heart affected to think of the good time that is coming, when we shall ever be with the Lord : but ask, are you ready yet for to go to him, though it be through fires, waters, thorns, sorrows, death itself? who can say yes? but (say mens hearts) shut the Lord out a little longer, let not the door stand open yet; yet this must be: And therefore for explication's sake, let me, 1. Shew you when the soul is in readiness for the Lord Jesus. 2. The reasons why there must be a continual readiness.

S E C T. III.

Quest. *WHEN is the soul in readiness to enjoy Christ?*

Ans. As there are four things which make a christian unready, so this readiness consists in four things contrary.

1. That which makes a christian unready for him, are those strong fears, and jealousies, and damping doubts of the love of Christ to him. The soul happily has made choice of him, is content with him, melts into wonderment and love to think that he should love him: what me? and Christ has writ him on his heart, and on the palms of his hands; "But Israel saith, my God hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me," Isa. xlix. 14. Is it possible? is it credible? one that has been so vile, one that still has such a heart, for him to set his heart on me? surely no: hence the soul is afraid to die, and desires too much to live still: and the more he thinks of that time, and blessedness of following the Lamb wherever he goes, the more he fears and sees this may possibly never be my portion: there may be some falleness in my heart towards him that I never yet saw,

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some secret knot that was never yet unloosed : and hence not yet ready. Hence many a christian saith, if I had a little more assurance let him come when he will : Thus some think it was with Hezekiah, who though he walked before God with a "perfect heart," yet bitterly complained that he was cut off, Isa. xxxviii. *per totum*. So therefore then the soul is ready and prepared for him, when he has some comfortable assurance of the love of Christ towards him, that it can say, if I live he loves me, though he kills me by death, yet I know that he loves me : nay, then he loves me most, when he puts an end to my sins, and to my sorrows too ? And therefore now saith as one ready to receive a prince, now let him come to me, or send for me when he will : why so ? " Who can " separate me from the love of Christ ?" Rom. viii. 35. That look as it is with a soldier that is to go to war, where many bullets and arrows are like to fall about him, and him while he has no armour on ; call him to the captain, and he will say he is not ready yet, but when he has his armour on of proof, and such armour that he knows, let him receive never so many wounds, yet he shall escape with his life, and triumph with his captain afterward : Now give him but his watch-word he is ready, though never so weak, yet I am sure I shall escape with my life, nay not so much as hurt. So a christian wanting his assurance, wants his armour ; he is weak, and powers of darkness will assault him, and he is slain by them, now he is unready ; but if assured, though weak and feeble, he is now at Christ's watch-word, I know I shall live, I may fall, but I shall rise again ; this puts courage and spirit into a christian, Dan. iii. 17, 18. Heb. xi. 35. Others were tormented, (and so ready) " not accepting deliverance ;" why so ? to " obtain a better resurrection," which they are said to see by the eye of faith, and this was by poor weak women ; therefore labour for this, else not prepared.

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The Lord would have his people look death and dangers in the face, and triumph in sorrows, and not faint-hearted, (which cannot be done without this) that the world may see that there is more than men in them, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18, and v. 1. Who would be without this? yet may we not complain, as Christ of his disciples, "Oh foolish and slow of heart to believe all that is written," so many promises yet not assured, so many experiences yet not established, and therefore not yet prepared and ready for the coming of the Lord? A man that has a fair estate and house befallen him, so long as he is in suit for it, dares not dwell in it, but makes a shift where he is: but then he is ready when quiet possession is given him. So get the Lord to pass sentence for assurance of your everlasting habitation, then are you ready to dwell therein.

2. Then a man is unprepared for the Lord Jesus his coming, while he wants affections suitable to the majesty, and according to the worth and love of the Lord Jesus. Suppose a woman knows her husband's love, yet if she have lost her love to him, or if she love him, it is only as she loves another man, not according to the worth of her husband's person, or the greatness of his love: Is she fit now to appear before him, when no heart to receive him? so although you question not Christ's love to you, and thank God you doubt little of it, yet where is your heart? your love to him? have you not lost your love, your first love, or second love? if you have love it is not divided to other things, as wife, child, friends, hopes of provision for them, and too much care hereupon for that? or if you do love him, it is with a carnal love, he is no more than a lust hath had, and it may be not so much, it is with a cold love; now you are unfit for him: hence the Lord, Luke xxi. 34. "Take heed your hearts be not overcharged," 1 Pet. iv. 7. Now therefore then the soul is prepared to meet Christ, when if the soul has lost

its affections, it recovers them out of the hands of all creatures that stole them away from Christ, and hence David prays, "Oh spare that I may recover my strength:" and when it breaks out with such love to Christ as is fitting for him, 2 Tim. iv. 8. there is the righteous Judge ready to give the crown, when Christ's appearing is loved, *i. e.* they are so taken with him, as that they love the looks of him, it would rejoice my heart to see, which shall make others tremble to behold him: Oh it must be a dear love, a spring of running love without measure, for this is the difference between affections of saints and hypocrites to Christ, the one arises like a morning-dew which is soon licked up by the sun, Hos. vi. 4. the heat of affections after other things licks it up; but the love of saints to Christ is like a spring which rises to everlasting life; a spring is but little, but yet the farther it goes, the wider it is, till at last swallowed up in the sea, and there is no measure of water: so saints have but a little love, but the longer they live, the more enlarged for Christ, and there is no measure, but all is too little, they never can, never do love enough, so that look as it is said in another case, Psal. cii. 13, 14. "It is time for thee to build up Jerusalem," *i. e.* to return to thy people in thy ordinances, for "they love the stones;" so then it is time for Christ to come, and then the fit and set time is come for a people to meet with Christ out of ordinances, when the set time is come when they love ordinances, and love Christ much more. When a man is gone beyond sea, and all his friends and estate are at home, they long for him, and he is left among enemies: why comes he not to them? why send they not for him? why they know he is sickly, and cannot live on the diet of the country; hence he is unfit to come; but when once that is come to pass, that he can live only on it, then he is ready whenever they send: so when men can live with, and be content

tent alone with Christ and his love; now they are fit. With what face can a man appear before Christ, when he requires nothing but love, and he has not that.

3. Then a man is unready for Christ, while he neglects the work of Christ, for suppose a man has some inward love to Christ, yet neglects and has no heart to do the work of Christ: he is as yet no more fit to meet Christ, than a steward who has had much entrusted him, to improve for his Lord's use, and he has let all seasons go wherein he might have traded for him, and gained somewhat to him. How can he appear before him when no fair account is to be seen; so the Lord has entrusted thee with many talents, times, strength, means, &c. and you are not lords, but stewards of all these. Now do you not let many fair seasons and winds blow by? you have (if espoused to Christ) every man some work. Now how can you stand before Christ if that be neglected? Oh thus it is with many christians; hence those sad alarms of conscience, and shaking of God's Spirit, after many loose days dipt in some good duties. What dost thou that others do not that never shall see God's face in heaven?

Now, therefore, then the soul is ready for the Lord, when it is daily at it, finishing God's work: hence John xvii. 5. "I have finished my work, now glorify me." Christ has given us our lives' work, day's work, every hour's work; for Christ has ever employment; now though a soul may live long, and cannot finish its life's work, yet if it finish its days work or hour's work, it may have comfort then if the Lord should come. That look as it is with a mariner when he has his freight, now let the wind come to drive him out of the haven, he is ready to depart: so here, 2 Pet. i. 8, 9, 10, 11. "If ye do these things and abound, an open entrance shall be ministered unto you," *i. e.* when a christian is ever acting for Christ, and adding one grace to another in his course, then

then he is so ready that an open entrance is made for him : Therefore look after this. It is with most professors commonly, as it is with a woman that loves her husband, and begins to dress herself, but so much business to do, that she doth it but by starts ; hence call her never so late, she will say she is not yet ready, she has so much to do she cannot ; so it is here : or, as it is in a house where all things are in a lumber, and many things wrapt up and put into holes ; so long as all things be in a lumber, there is no readiness. So many a soul has a heart fit to receive Christ, but all things are in a lumber, in a confusion, out of place and order, and hence not yet ready to entertain Christ, but when this work is done, then ready. Oh betimes do this work, set things to right in your souls.

4. Then a man is unready, when having done his work he grows puffed up with it : for let all the three former be wrought in the soul, if now the soul be puffed up, thinks highly of itself, attributes any thing to itself : as he said in another case, “ they are too many “ for the Lord ; ” so he is too big for the Lord. And truly this we shall find it is pretty easy to be mean in our own eyes, after we have been indeed careless and vile before the Lord ; but when the Lord has mightily assisted, enlarged, assured, enabled, comforted, quickened, now to be as nothing, this is difficult. Hence Knox on his death-bed had this temptation of meriting when Hezekiah was sick, he was cast down, but when well, and God gave him great treasures, his heart was lifted up, now he was unfit. Now, therefore, when a christian is ready to give all to free grace, and to adore that, now he is ready for the Lord, Psalm cviii. 1. “ My heart is prepared, I “ will sing and give praise.” God’s last end is to bring the soul to the praise of the riches of his grace, not only to enjoy God as Adam. Now the great reason why Christ comes not to his people presently af-
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ter they are espoused to him, it is to make them ready to attain that end. Hence he leaves sin, temptations, sorrows, desertions, on purpose that they may at conclusion look back, and see if ever saved, pardoned, it is grace. Now therefore when the soul is brought to do this, when he has this rent in his hand, now the Lord is ready to receive him, and it too, and he is prepared for the Lord : he that has not his rent ready, himself is not as yet at all ready to meet with, and see his landlord. So that you think you boast not, O the Lord sees you do, or have not hearts so enlarged towards grace as you should, it is certain you are yet unready then ; but when empty, and poor, and cast down, and makest an infinite matter of a small sin, and settest a high price on a little love, much more on infinite, now you are prepared : hence David falls a praising when near to death, and the Lord near to come to him.

S E C T IV.

Reason 1. THE law of respect and love requires this of us : when Peter would express his love unto Christ, Luke xxii. 33. he professes he was "not only ready to go to prison, but to die with him." Christ has poor respect and love if men will not so much as be alway ready to receive him : it certainly argues a careless heart that flights Christ, that is not ever prepared to receive Christ.

2. Because the time of Christ's coming is then when we least look for him, ver. 13. Hence a christian ought to be ever ready to receive him. Many of eminent parts, when the church had most need of them, then are cut down : many at their first conversion, before they or others almost could tell what to make of them, the Lord hath cropt them in the bud. Men find their hearts unfit and unready, they think hereupon that hereafter they shall get their hearts in-

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to better order and tune, when these businesses are over, but yet will live at liberty a little while : why then it is most likely is the Lord's time of coming, even now when they think least of it, Luke xii. 40.

3. Because the Lord has set apart every one that is espoused to the Lord Jesus, only for the fruition of Christ, and use of Christ, 1 Cor. iii. ult. " You are Christ's, and Christ is God's." A woman that is not chosen, nor set apart for the fellowship of a prince, she may go how she will, and do what she will, any base drudgery work ; but she that is chosen to be next unto him, and only to behold and love him, she is not to plead she has so much business to do, and so many friends to speak with, that she cannot make herself ready : she is set apart for a better person, and for more noble employment. So here men of the world not loved of God, nor chosen and set apart for him, may do what they will : but when the Lord has chosen and set you apart of purpose for this end, Ephes. i. 4. " Chosen to be holy before him in love," *i. e.* to stand ever in his presence before him, with a spirit of dearest love unto him. Hence the Lord has taken the care of all things else, 1 Pet. v. 7. that we might mind and do this thing ; if in danger, he will deliver ; if in want, he will provide ; if weak, he will strengthen : only now be ready for the Lord, Psal. xlv. 10. " Forget thy country, and thy father's house, so shall the Lord desire thy beauty." You are not now free to love and follow whom you please, the Lord has bound you to himself by love, and you have bound yourself by promise to the Lord again : Therefore now a christian after once espoused to Christ, is better than all the world, being the bride of the Lamb ; and he has a better and greater good for to enjoy : therefore he should scorn and abhor to match himself to, or to do any thing for any other creature, and there methinks should sit as one upon a watch-tower, looking

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out, and telling the clock now day is near, waiting only for Christ; O let it be so: If in heaven, you shall have only Christ, O prepare for him much more now. As a woman that is matched to a rich man, all the servants attend on her, and follow her, she is wholly and only for her husband: so it should be here.

4. Because he has prepared and made all things else ready for the soul, it is hard if he has prepared a place in heaven, and grace in heaven, not to prepare an heart, and make it ready for him, John xiv. 1, 2, 3. his kingdom was ready long ago, and his father ready to accept and entertain thee, and his heart loves and desires, all are ready after thee: hence be ready to meet with him. "I am my Beloved's."

S. E C T. V.

Use 1. **HENCE** see the great unkindness of many a soul immediately after his espousing to Jesus Christ, who having once given himself to Christ, and received comfort thereby, presently grows more careless than before he was matched unto the Lord Jesus, who should now stand in a holy watchfulness and readiness to receive Christ, as it is Psal. lxxxv. 8. "Let them not turn again to folly," because they are apt so to do. Many say when in some distress, and after long waiting, if the Lord would pity once, then happy I; I would give away any thing, all I have unto him: well, the Lord pities the soul when in its low estate, and then it blesses God, but like the Israelites, soon forgets his works, his love, and after great peace from God, comes greatest carelessness: can this stand with grace, and Christ? very hardly; but yet it may, for there are two things that make for it.

1. Because at first conversion there is much seeking of Christ, for healing the horror and smart of sin, as well as for the curing of the wound and scar of sin:

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hence when espoused, and horror being past, that wheel being broken, a man draws more heavily now, and neglects seeking; now the knife is out of his heart, he cries not so earnestly.

2. Because when espoused, and much affected, commonly a man trusts to his affections, when he has a fulness of them: hence the Lord lets Satan prevail. Luke xxii. 31, 32. "Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat," and "I (saith Peter) am ready to die with thee;" but you see he fell, and then when the Lord looked upon him, he "went out and wept bitterly:" How shamefully hast thou fallen, should any love him more than you if ever he pity? well, for his name-sake he has done it. But how oft hast thou broken covenant? how forgetful of the Lord's kindness? The Lord looks upon thee this day, why hast thou so soon forgot me, and forsaken me? have I not taken thee from the dung-hill, nay from hell? and whereas I had so many thousands to set my love on, I chose thee; and whereas thou couldest not love me when I offered my self, thou couldest not return me love again, I gave it therefore to thee, yea and have given myself to thee forever: Hast thou thus forgotten me, when as I take little twrongs from thee more heavily than great ones from others? O that this might make you go out and mourn bitterly: so if ever you have tasted that love as Peter did, Christ's looks will humble you.

Use 2. Hence see the reason why some godly people die so uncomfortably, and with such distress of spirit; why they have not lived in an expectation of Christ, and hence they cry out themselves, not knowing whether they go, insomuch as some have not been comforted by all former experiences, and by all present consolations of ministers: O no, it is now too late to speak, they thank them for their love, but God has otherwise thought of them; yet if any hope be given them it is ever picked out from some word, and they

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cry, O I thirst for a little mercy, and then die; and what is the reason of it; what need I speak? Themselves will tell you, and have done it, O I have lived thus and thus before you, but my heart in secret has gone after the world, &c. I have neglected the Lord secretly, I have seldom thought of, or prepared for death, and I had thought to have been better, but the Lord has met with me: I know violence of disease may do it sometime, but I speak how it is many times; whereas otherwise an open entrance should be made, 2 Pet. i. 8, 9, 10, 11. And as it has been with some, so take warning lest it be so with you; you may be saved alive, yet to suffer wreck on the shore is uncomfortable; and know it, if your conscience be awake, it cannot but be so. Therefore do not conclude they were damned without Christ, but they were not made ready for Christ; and it may be your time draws nigh, and what have you to say? now a world for half an hour will a dying distressed man say.

Use 3. Is of a Four-fold exhortation, to all those especially that the Lord has espoused to himself.

CHAP. VIII. SECT. I.

A Four-fold Exhortation to Believers.

Exhort. 1. **T**O quicken up all those doubting, drooping, yet sincere hearts, that much question the love of Christ to them, now to use all diligence to make their calling, and election, and the love of Christ sure to them, not but that it is sure on Christ's part, but make it sure on your part too; else how can you be in a readiness to meet the Lord Jesus; while the strong man keeps the palace, the goods be in peace; but when Christ hath once driven Satan out of his throne, then nothing sometimes but war, but doubts and fears; Satan told God to his face, Job served him for nought, much more the soul it
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self: and some divines think the very first ingredient of Satan's poison, and the first assault on Christ himself, Mat. iv. was by seeking to make him doubt of of his sonship, "If thou be the Son of God," &c. And his wiles are here very great, that hence very few living christians have any settled comfortable evidence of God's eternal love to them in his Son: and hence many sad events follow. How can any bless the Lord for that love which he knows not of? many sad events follow. How can any bless the Lord for that love which he knows not of? many times it is with a man's doubts drooping from his mind, as it is with his continual dropping on his lungs, there is a daily consuming of what once was; that many a christian doubts away his life, his heart, his strength, and when all is wasted, glad now to return to that where he should at first have begun. And hence in one word, he is made every day unready for Christ. O therefore quiet not yourselves in that estate, as I fear too many do (at least for a time) it is one of the most dangerous estates that can be, to be troubled with weak fears, and yet rest in uncertain hopes; but bring it to a conclusion, Is the Lord Jesus mine or no? and if he be yours, and his love yours, see it, that you may trample on the neck of death, and triumph over hell, and the grave, and long to be with the Lord, and love the appearing of the Lord, and go away with joy unspeakable and full of glory out of this world, as to your wedding; and if there be any hope of getting it, who would be without it? some of you it may be have a long time been careless in seeking for it, hence want it, some of you have been traders with the Lord long, and yet doubt; some of you have not clear evidence, but content yourselves without being thankful to the Lord for what he hath done for you, hence still doubt. Others have grey hairs on your head, or at least are near your graves, the battle is near, your armour is not on, you are not yet ready,

ready, and so still doubt. I remember what Christ said of Mary's box, "she prepared that for his burial;" it may be that these truths may be prepared for your approaching departure; and therefore light your lamps at this fire, and light of the Lord's love to you, and see that indeed he loves thee.

Object. But why do you persuade to this, till the spirit comes and speaks it? How can I see it;

Ans. 1. It is true the Spirit only can do it, but yet the same Spirit that seals the elect, the same Spirit commands the elect not to sit idle, and dream of the Spirit, but to use all diligence to make it sure; and you shall never have it (unless you lay hold on a fancy for it) on those terms.

2. Though there is an immediate witness of the spirit, of the love of Christ, yet it doth most usually and firstly witness by means. And hence I shall give you means looking only to the Spirit of Christ to set them on. Evangelical precepts have a power: For gospel-ministration of the Spirit consists not only of stories and promises, but commands, and the elect feel them: Hence carnal men under the law, yet pretending gospel, will profess the law is preached when to any evangelical duty, because they feel not the power of the gospel, being not yet under it. And the means I shall mention, are only general to establish the hearts of some.

Means 1. Make a sad enquiry first of this, whether the Lord hath loved thee for his own everlasting name-sake or no; for if the Lord hath loved thee for this cause, then thy great objection will be answered, and that deep valley will be filled. How can the Lord love me that am thus vile before God, and fallen from God? why if the Lord for his own sake hath loved thee, then as no good in thee moved him to love thee, so no sin which he did know was and would be in thee can quench that love; and if he hath manifested his love to be grounded on this, though but once,

once, that same night when thou changeſt is not changed, but is ſtill as dear to him, and ever before him to move him to love thee ſtill, Rom. xi. 2. The apoſtle answers a cavil, “ Will God caſt away his people ? ” No, ſaith he, none that he foreknew ; and who are theſe ? ver. 5. “ A remnant according to “ grace as with us,” *i. e.* God hath for his grace-ſake choſen and called without reſpect of any thing elſe : Hence that is to be underſtood, 1 Sam. xii. 21, 22. For there are two ſorts of people in the church : 1. **Servants.** 2. **Sons,** John viii. 35. Hence there is a double love the Lord manifeſts to men.

1. Some he loves as ſervants, that as we hire ſome men to do our work, and give them meat and wages, and then turn them out of doors, or let them go : ſo God hath work to be done, for his ſons and ſaints, and for many reaſons hires wicked men to it, either by giving them reward in this life, or hopes of reward hereafter, and when the work is done, and uſe made of their gifts, graces, ſpirits, then turns them out of doors.

But 2. Some he loves as ſons, even the moſt fooliſh and weak in the world ſometimes : hence not for any ſervice they can do, but for his own ſake he will give them an inheritance, and love them as ſons, becauſe he will ; theſe abide ever in the Lord’s love : Hagar and Iſhmael caſt out, Sarah and Iſaac ſtay in the family

Queſt. How ſhall I know that ?

Anſ. 1. If the Lord loves thee for his name-ſake, it will draw thee to that fellowſhip with itſelf, that whatever thou wanteſt, thou wilt ſeek for it hence, by preſenting that name of God, that for his own ſake he would ſupply : I know the Lord loves for Chriſt’s ſake ; but why ſhould Chriſt help for his name-ſake : For thus many hypocrites think when they ſee God’s anger againſt them for their ſin, they ſeek to remove ſin, and when that is done, think God is at peace,
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and now all is well. They see the Lord is delighted with the obedience of his people, hence fall to that work, and now think the Lord is pleased with them. But if ever the Lord loves any man, he will first stop his mouth, whether Jew or Gentile, Rom. iii. 19. and make him on his knees know there is no reason for it, nay all reason against it. Now has not the Lord brought thee to this? and hence having nothing to quench God's anger, but Christ, hast held up him before God, and having nothing to move Christ, hast held up his name before him, and here hast rested thy wearied heart looking to him, if any grace be begun in thee, that he would perfect it; if none, that he would begin it; if unfit and unworthy, to prepare thee for it, only for his own good pleasure: this is one evidence of it. As it is in some seals, you can hardly perceive in the seal what is ingraven there, but set it on wax, you may see it evidently: so here, hardly can you see the Lord's love for his own sake; if thou cleavest with dearest affection to this love for its own sake; there thou art safe, Prov. xviii. 10. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower," &c. and this is not only at first conversion, but ever after all duties, all enlargements, Ezek. xvi. ult. And this does evidence love.

1. Because if thou hadst the righteousness of angels thou wouldst think it a good evidence, but this of Christ is a thousand times dearer.

2. This is a setting of God against himself, *i. e.* to answer himself; and hence saints, in all their straits and sorrows, hither had recourse; I speak not now of temporal blessings, but of everlasting love, and all the fruits of it, that here it hangs. Now I say, you are built in a rock higher than all powers of darkness; now a key is put into thy hand to unlock all God's treasure; now thou art in the very lap of love wrapt up in it, when here thy heart rests: and therefore

fore if this be thus, see it, and wonder his name has moved him to love me.

2. You shall find this, if the Lord for his name-sake loves thee, there is not any carriage or passage of providence of him to thee, but he gets himself a name first or last by it : for if this be God's end, every passage of Providence is but a means to this end : hence he will attain this end by every act of his Providence towards thee : hence you shall find that those very sins that dishonour his name, he will even by them (and if by them, by all things else) get himself a name, he will be so far from casting thee out of his love, that he will do the good by them. Those very sins that God damns others for, he will make to humble thee, empty thee. Pharisees persecuted Christ, and lost all for it, Paul was so, and it humbled him all his life, "Not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God;" and it made him lay up all his wealth in mercy; "I was received to mercy," 1 Tim. i. Mary sins much, and God forgives much, and she loves much; others sinned much, and God hardened much; Judas betrays Christ, and repents, and hangs himself, and flies from him; Peter denies him, and weeps, and hence he is the first that preaches him. And this is certain, in the best hypocrite, sins left in him, either never make him better, but blind and harden him, and he has his distinctions of infirmity, &c. that he flights them day by day, till all his days are run out; or if any good, it is no more than Judas, or Cain, some legal terrors, or other light flashes of comfort, but to be more humble indeed, &c. this he finds not. Now is it not so with thee? Doth not thy weakness strengthen thee with Paul? Doth not thy blindness make thee cry for light? and those cries have been heard, out of darkness God has brought light. Thou hast felt venom and risings of heart against Christ, and do they not make thee loath thy self more? that thou think-

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est never any so beholding to grace? do not thy falls into sin make thee more weary of it, watchful against it, long to be rid of it? and so sin abounds, but grace abounds: Why should this be so? for his name's-sake, because he will love thee; hence it is so great and unmatched, that he will make thy poison thy food, thy death thy life, thy damnation salvation, thy very greatest enemies thy greatest friends. And hence Mr. Fox said he thanked God for his sins more than his good works. I have marvelled at God's dealings with his people, they depart, and stay long, and care not for returning again; in that time a mighty power teaches, humbles, brings back; when they never thought of it. O the reason is, God will have his name: now if thus, your assurance will be strong and constant, but if you build thus, I have done this, &c. I have that, your assurance will not stand; therefore look and see if it be not thus with you.

Means 2. Take heed you do not build your assurance from a mingled covenant of works and grace, for this is the frame of divers when they lie under the first covenant only of doing, they will not take this as any evidence, as they have no reason so to do, Rom. ix. 31. Nor when a man lies under the second covenant of believing barely, and if it be a dead faith, they have no evidence or reason so to do. Hence they mingle the covenants, and think thus; If I can believe in Christ, and perform universal obedience to all the commands of God, I shall be safe; hence set upon the observance of both; and finding they can never do them, especially the latter, hence are ever troubled, and never have any settled peace. Hence those Galatians Paul writes to, perverting and mingling the covenants, were troubled, Gal. i. 7. & 5. 12. Not (belov- ed) but that whoever believes and performs universal obedience evangelically to the whole law, he cannot but do well; and he that does it not, but lives in any one sin, let him evidence his faith if he can. But I speak when a man submits to it, *sub forma pæderis*, if I

can do it, and because I cannot do it, hence doubt. Hence gather your evidence of God's love primarily and chiefly from your subjection to the second covenant, Gal. vi. 16. "Peace on them that walk according to this rule;" for Adam's righteousness that did tie him to God, it brake; hence no life, nor evidence from that; but faith is an everlasting invincible grace, upheld by the mighty power of God, and hence here will be everlasting evidence and peace, 1 Pet. i. 8. "Whom though we see not, yet believing we rejoice." *Object.* Is a christian then free from the law? *Ans.* Yes, he is free from it as a covenant: hence though it be broken by him, he is not cast out of covenant, or favour, but he is not free from it as a rule, from which if he swerves he is to call himself, not God's love into question: Why? because it has pleased the Father in another covenant to offer life, give life, and hence only to evidence life. Whatever the law requires I have, at that instant I did believe, I performed it in a Saviour by faith: and that I myself may do every title of it, I come unto a Saviour for it by faith; so that when Satan objects you have no Christ, nor love of a Christ, because no faith, and no faith because you cannot do this or that. Answer, I cannot do it indeed, I never undertook it to have life or love thus, but I have done it in another, and I can do all things by Christ, if he will help me, under whose grace I lie, and hence will be so far from doubting, that I will rejoice in mine infirmities, that I am a fit subject for the power and grace of Christ to shew itself upon. Thus retire to the second covenant ever, if ever you would get any settled peace. And from neglect of this flows a world of uneasableness in many a spirit, ever complaining, and why? I cannot do this or that, never peace now; but cannot you lie under the Lord that he would help? keep here, and keep your peace here.

Object. But many a christian that retires hither hath no peace, and so have I done, yet find none?

Ans.

Ans. It is then upon a double ground which you are to avoid : either, 1. Because you have faith, but you imprison your faith, you put out the eyes, and shackle the feet of faith ; for faith will conquer and triumph over all sins, and fears of the world, if at liberty, 1 John v. 4. like a master in a ship, if he cannot save the ship one way, let him have liberty, he will by another. If it be objected, you have departed from Christ, what have you to do with him ; I'll return faith faith to my first husband. *Object.* But he is angry with you. *Ans.* If he be angry for my departure from him, I will not provoke him more by staying here ; who knows but he may repent ? *Object.* But you cannot go to him with all your heart. *Ans.* True, yet I'll look to him to draw me. *Object.* But you feel nothing. *Ans.* Yet I will wait. *Object.* But you will wait in vain. Still I will look he would keep me from that. Now stop at any of these, trouble comes, suffer it to shift, it will find rest. As it is with the anchor, let it down but little, the ship drives ; but let it down at full length, it will ride in storms ; then it is wrestling of faith that gets the blessing, where opposition makes the soul take faster hold ; as it was with Jacob. The woman of Canaan got it thus.

Or 2. It is because they look for another kind of faith, and hence own not, as the Jews the Messiah, they made account to have received him in state, and he came low ; so men look for a superlative faith, but want it. But thus the soul espoused to Christ, so long as marriage-covenant lasts, she may conclude of love.

Means 3. Do not fear the love of Christ is not toward you, because he hides his face, and departs sometimes from you ; husbands remain so when they depart, and leave the house for many a day, and it is simple to say he is not my husband now. So here, the Lord loves his people, yet departs, Isa. liv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and truly it is very hard when inward blows, and sad desertions, and outward miseries, and

no Christ found, though sought for. But how shall I then know and discern his love? *Ans.* Many things might be said this way, only one thing observe, whether thy love remains still to him for himself; for it is a rule that most commonly a christian's purest and dearest love appears in Christ's absence from him. As it is with friends, while with us we love them, but when gone, we feel that love more quick than before. Jerusalem lies in the dust, and now the very dust is beloved, Psal. cii. 13, 14. and if it be so, it is certain we love him because he loved us, and we continue to love him, because he continues to love us, now look then if thy love do not appear, 1. In mourning for his absence. 2. In longing for his presence. 3. In blessing him for a little that is left of himself, as seeing such want of him; and is not this for himself to have his company again, that though God gives thee all other things, yet when thou comest to consider the Lord is gone, this strikes near, as when Christ departed away, Jon xvi. 5, 6. But because love may be benumbed, and lie dead, therefore try it a time of parting, and put thy heart thus to it; if he be none of thine, then take thy fill in thy sin, and forsake him: no beloved, here you shall see the heart will yield and melt, John xiii. 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. and it will say, Lord let me never sin more against thee, though never saved by thee. And take it for a rule, do not think the Lord has left off his love to you when you depart from him, and he from you: but lying in your departures, O that is sad; but return again, it comforts the Lord's heart, especially when it is for himself, not for peace and salvation, but though he never saves me, O yet I will look after him.

Means 4. Look to the tender-heartedness of the Lord Jesus; for (beloved) all the doubts of christians arise chiefly from this head, from a hard opinion of Christ, which Satan suggests, as at first, Gen. iii. 5. that

that so they might take in his wares. God's people do not know the tender-heartedness of the Lord Jesus; Satan presents him only in wrath, when any threats are spoken, all these are mine, saith the soul, &c. And now if any woman lives with a man that is of a hoggish churlish disposition, she will be ever doubting of his love. Men do not know it I say, and hence when any misery or trouble comes, they grow jealous of him, which the Lord takes exceeding ill, Deut. i. 27.

Quest. How shall I know that tender-heartedness of Christ?

Ans. By his carriage towards men when he was here on earth, for now he is in heaven in glory, and we know not what his disposition is: therefore his life on earth was the living looking-glass of his heart for ever. In four things.

1. Never any came to him that he cast away, whatever their sorrows or sins were, but healed them every one, if they came to him with their miseries: for in healing their miseries he did but shew his readiness to heal them of their sin, hence Matthew applies that, Matt. viii. 17. "He bare our infirmities."

2. When men came to him for bye ends, not for himself chiefly, he rebukes them for it, and shews he was more ready to give himself, than bread to them, John vi. 27.

3. Those that were lost, and sick, and miserable, and came not to him, he went up and down to seek and save them, the "lost sheep," Luke xix. 10.

4. Those that would none of his love, he pitied and had compassion on their misery and sin; as on them that were sheep without a shepherd; he mourned for the hardness of their hearts: he wept over Jerusalem. Now look upon Christ the same still: thou comest to him in secret to take away all iniquity, to give thee himself; tell me, dost thou think the Lord if here would reject thee ever. 2. But I dare not receive

ceive him. *Ans.* Thou wilt take bread from him daily, and he is more willing to give himself. 3. Thou canst not come to him, nor find him, but only sometimes, nor see him; well but then he will seek thee out. 4. O but I oft reject: yet he pities thee still. O think of this compassion of Christ, and make him as if present; it is a special means to establish the heart in believing.

Means 5. Learn to know when you are bound not to give way to your fear of God's love; for sometimes it is the case of many a precious soul, that he has clear evidence of God's love to him: and what is there against it? nothing but a fear, what if I shall be deceived when all is done? and hence the heart sinks exceedingly. As some women that have special love, if once they take a jealousy of their husband, it is never removed: So here.

Quest. How shall I know this?

Ans. First, If those fears thou hast, drive thee farther from Christ, it is clear you are then to cast them off: those fears that cause sin are sinful, but to be driven from Christ is sinful, Luke v. 9, 10. "Lord depart from me, I am sinful:" "Fear not," saith Christ, 1 Sam. xii. 20. they were ready to cast off all, "Fear not" saith he; think of this, what it is you get by nursing up those fears, they hinder your joy in, and your love to Christ; your blessing of Christ, cause a dead discouraging heart: nay though they drive you to Christ one way, if they drive you from Christ another way by questioning his care; concluding against his truth, never doubt they are vile, Mat. viii. 26. "Why did ye fear, O ye of little faith." So far therefore as fear drives us to Christ, it is good, otherwise to be cut off.

2. If the Lord has drawn thy heart to come to Christ, and when undone, every way secretly persuaded thy heart that thou shalt have help if thou come, and by coming hast received healing virtues of thy lusts and vile

vile affections from the Lord Jesus, fear not now, it is a sin to fear I shall not have help, as Mark v. 33. the woman with the bloody issue, she was afraid she had presumed, hence came trembling, but the Lord told her, "Now fear not, be it unto thee according to thy faith:" only thy issue is but begun to heal. What say you, have you never come to him, never received any healing from him? that is hard. Surely it is so, that I would not be in my lust again for a world.

Means 6. If none of these prevail, but the Lord follows thee with fears on fears, as wave on wave, then see if there be not some guile of spirit in thee, *i. e.* some sin you have or would give way to, if you had assurance of God's love. It was the speech of one to me, next to the donation of Christ, no mercy like this, to deny assurance long; and why? for if the Lord had not, I should have given way to a loose heart and life, but, &c. so if the Lord should deal so with thee, it may be thou wouldst lie in thy sins, if thou hadst peace there, and it may be you have had it, but sinned, and not confessed, not lamented, not opposed; Thus it was with David, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Hence when he confessed, the Lord forgave in his conscience his sin. Men will withdraw their love from their wives if it make them wanton, and deal sharply with them: so one that never restored could never get peace; some ever complaining, never settled, because they have their truces with sin, and would have peace with Christ, and it cannot be. And this is a rule I have long held, in them that have clear light of the gospel, long denial of assurance is like fire to burn out some sin, and then the Lord will speak peace, Jud. x. 16. And therefore take this counsel, and God will tell thee thy sin, if thou art desirous that he should find it out, but get this mercy from him, Zach. xiii. 9.

Means 7. Bring thy heart to a strait, either to reject or receive him to be thine, he is offered to be
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king and saviour, and lord and husband; now thou shalt have his heart, his hand, his Spirit, his Father, his kingdom, his ordinances, his angels, himself, if you receive him, or else if not, you shall lose him, and then woe to thee, when any mercy, any misery, any ordinance befalls thee; for all shall suck thy blood, consume thee, and fit thee for eternal ruin: and then I wish, O that I had taken him, but then too late; therefore receive him or reject him: O I cannot; that's another matter: However we propound these evangelical commands that may come with power, and therefore know, that if they do not now, they shall arise again in time.

S E C T. II.

Exhort. 2. **T**HIS is not all that which makes you ready for Christ, unless your love is set and fixed on him: and therefore look that it be ready. I doubt not but that there is glowing in your hearts, some love to the Lord, it cannot be that all should be quenched, that all his kindness should be forgotten, but remembered many times with some affliction: but know it, if it be so, your lamp is not yet in your hand, nor your souls ready to meet the Lord: For look as it is with a mighty prince, that shall set his heart on some poor servant, and he requires no portion but to love him the more, and she cannot bring her heart to love him more than other mean fellows, is she fit or ready to be matched unto him? So here: Hence Matth. x. 37. "He that loves father or mother," &c. then you are ready when your love is fit for such an husband; and therefore tho' you feel some love under the ashes (when you stir up your hearts) to the Lord Jesus, yet if it be not a fit love befitting his excellency, and the glory of his person, when you can draw out buckets of love, and pour it upon other things, but scarce fetch out a drop for Christ, and yet

yet you hope that will serve the turn ; I tell you no, you are yet unfit and unready for him. Look as it was with their offering the testimonies of love and thankfulness, Mal. i. 14. so it is here. And therefore my exhortation shall be as is said in that Psalm, Psal. lxxxvi. 7, 8. " Give unto the Lord the honour due " unto his name : " So give to the Lord the love that is due unto him, that love that is fit for him.

Quest. What is that love the Lord would have, which is fit for him ?

Ans. 1. Beloved, I hope if you think not your blood too dear for Christ, you will not think any love too much for Christ : Yet because I would not have you aim at an uncertain mark, and shoot at a venture, I shall single out that love which I hope your own consciences cannot but say is fit. And,

1. I had thought to have sought for this from you, viz. Give the Lord Jesus but that love, no more love than thou hast given to thy lusts, the Lord will be contented with it, Rom. vi. 19. " As ye have yielded," &c. so now ; but that it may be you may think this love too base for him, yet give him but this, and the Lord would be contented with it, and accept of it ; and those that shall not, it shall be their torment in hell to think of this word : O that I had given the Lord Jesus that love I gave to my base lusts, I had had him, and been in heaven with him. But I wholly press a second.

2. Do but love him as he loveth thee, *i. e.* you cannot answer the greatness of his love, but do it for your measure : If you cannot pay him in pounds, yet pay him in pence ; and this is fit for him : For 1. He is worthy of love, there is beauty in him why thou shouldest desire him ; there is none in thee. 2. Thy love shall have a recompence, 2 Tim. iv. 8. he never can have recompence from thee. 3. He loves thee first with his own love, now that is unreasonable not

to reflect his beams, and return him his own again in similitude, if not in parity.

Quest. Wherein appears the love of the Lord to me, that so I may see how manifest the like love to him?

Ans. He hath loved thee more than himself, more than his own honour ; for “ he made himself of no reputation,” Phil. ii. 7. more than his own comforts, he left the bosom of a Father, and bore the wrath of a Father for thee ; more than his own life, he saw thy neck upon the block, and God’s axe up to give the bloody fatal stroke ; and he came in thy room, and loved thy life more than his own, lost his own before one hair of thy head should perish, though he knew thee a traitor to God, and an enemy to himself, Rom. v. 10. Rev. i. 5, 6. if this be not thus, woe to the living, woe to the dying. What art thou but a sad spectacle hung up in thy chains in this world for angels in heaven to see and tremble at, and for devils, sins, and eternal sorrows, like fowls of heaven to prey upon. Now is it not fit that thou shouldst love him more than thyself? his honour more than thine own, nay more than thy life? Rev. xii. 11. I have known them whom the Lord hath revealed this love to, that have thought it too little to do ; and hence have wished they had been born in those times that they might have laid down their lives for him : Where is now this love ? Doth not self-love swallow up all ? Lord, what self-seeking, self-serving, self-minding, self-honouring, self-pleasing, and the Lord himself and his love forgot, as if there were no Christ, or in him no love.

2. He hath loved thee when he might have passed by thee, and loved others that might have won the Lord towards them (I speak after the manner of men) rather than thee ; men of greater place, greater gifts and parts, greater pomp in the world, but Rom. ix. Jacob shall be loved, Esau hated : he hath passed by
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kings with their crowns, and now set his heart on thee a babe, when wise ones know him not; foolish, when prudent ones see him not; weak, when strong and mighty receive him not. Yea, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. i. 28. "Base things, and things which are not." God hath made thee nothing in thine own eyes. Behold his love, and now do the like for him. It may be sometime thy carnal eye sees more glory in the creature than in Christ; more in the honour of man, than in the honour of a Christ, &c. And hence mightest set thy heart on them rather than on Christ, because strongly tempted so to do, and it may after some scourges be saved at last, yet pass by them, and set thy heart only on him. We judge of a friend by the times of trial, and of a christian, by a time of temptation. Now a Balaam, a witch may not dare in time of temptation, to fall into it. Oh get one strain higher, and go one step farther than a witch, though I might let my heart loose after the world, I will not love it, the love of the Lord deserves it, the love of the Lord constrains me to give my love to him, and not to the world, though I might hide it, and have pardon for it.

3. He loves thee although thou wrongest him, Isa. xliii. 22.—26. when he is so wronged that he is ready to give thee up, yet Hof. xi. 8, 9. "He is God and not man;" nay which is more wonderful, where sin there grace abounds. Hence David makes this an argument, Psal. xxv. 11. "Forgive because it is great." And hence Moses, Deut. xxxiii. 9. "Because it is a stiffnecked people." Oh therefore love him, though he smites thee, though he forsakes thee, wherein he may seem but indeed doth no wrong to thee, but love thee, chastisement is part of the portion of sons, not of bastards, Heb. xii. 6, 8. but do as that woman when she came to the stake, gave away her cloaths, some to one,

some to another, "Now farewell friends, and world, welcome love Christ." So if the Lord comes to take away all from thee, the child of thy body, the husband of thy youth, the wife of thy bosom, the comforts of thy life, provisions from thy family, bread from thy mouth, bid farewell to them, give them into the Lord's hands, and now say, welcome Christ. It is usual for christians at first conversion and espousing, the Lord loves them dearly, and tenders them, shews nothing but love to them, and then their love is fresh; afterward come hard frosts, and winter-storms, and cold blasts of displeased afflictions; now the soul apprehending anger, and nothing else, it grows discouraged, so dies: when if it could stay and wait, it should see all from love, and doing it the greatest good. O remember this: he doth afflict me, he doth depart from me, he doth fear me with hell, yet I will love him never a whit the less: Though the Lord buries all the blessings he gives me, yet my love shall live, and if it do fall it shall arise.

4. He loved thee when in thy low estate, Psal. cxxxvi. 23. even when as no eye pitied thee, Ezek. xvi. nay when thou wert vilest, at the height of thy sin, under deepest depths of misery, and straightest captivity, after friends had almost ceased to counsel, word and spirit could do no good, after conscience had warned thee. O love him when he is in his lowest estate, when his enemies persecute him, and his seeming friends forsake him. Before you came to this land, you thought Christ and persecution, Christ and the meanest condition, nay Christ and death would be sweet: the Lord it may be doth or will try your love; and here you find Christ and losses in estate. Christ and crosses in your family, Christ and many fears, and toils, and cares. Do you love him now as well as ever you did for all this? O never was my heart worse! I doubt not but a discerning Christian may see how all the world is against Christ, nay many traitors

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in his own family, who love the bag more than Christ. Many foolish virgins who love their sleep and sloth more than Christ; nay the hearts and spirits of his own friends declining, that there is not that life of Christ, that presence, and favour, and power of Christ in hearts, in prayers, in lives, and no complaints of this: Now is the fittest time of love, when no eye sees, when no heart loves him, or cares for him, Psal. cxix. 126, 127. "Therefore I love thy commands," when he is shut out of every heart, when none to receive him, if any love it will appear now.

5. He doth love thee constantly every moment, John xiii. 1, 2. He hath thee every moment in his bosom, every moment thou art sinning, and he is pardoning. Sin, and Satan, and hell, and wrath are every moment waiting to hurt thee, and he is every moment watching over thee, redeeming of thee. Every moment sin and justice cry against thee, and yet he is continually "making intercession for thee," Isa. xxvi. 2, 3: Every moment he is blessing when thou art sinning. O the unknown love of the Lord Jesus! O these fits of love are not fit for him. A man every moment warming him, but still is cold, is it a sad sign that death is near: You can love him sometimes in a sermon, but soon after cold again, or in a sacrament, and presently heart-dead again: or after answer to prayers, and some special deliverances, and then the heart is unaffected again, and a little pang of love must content Christ: if he ceaseth one moment to love thee, and to manifest it to thee, then cease to love him; if he ceaseth not to love thee dearly, never to leave thee, O then ever love him.

Object. *But we have such distractions and cares?*

Ans. Men in love will follow their work, and women will do the housewifery of the house, and yet love is at no time to seek to their husbands, and shall the Lord have less?

6. He loves thee with an unmeasurable love, Rom.

v. 20. "Where sin, there grace hath abounded:" hence Eph. ii. 3, 4. "love," and "great love," ver. 7. "Exceeding riches of his grace:" For there is in Christ,

1. A created love. One man loves another exceedingly, as Jonathan did David. Now he hath the perfection of all human or angelical love towards his people put in him.

2. Increated love, infinite love of a God, and hence it is unmeasurable. He thinks nothing he doth too much, nothing he gives too dear: hence when world is slain, Satan cast out, when he is out, sin must out; when some sins are removed, the rest must; when they are out, then death must; when death, then hell. And when there is no life, no grace, he works it; it decays, he restores it; it cannot act, he quickens it; it cannot, doth not grow, he waters it. He hath given thee the earth, and the days of peace and patience; those are too little: he calls thee, and when thou canst not come, draws thee, and gives thee pardon: that is too little: he gives earth to thee, that is too little (for they are made co-heirs:) he gives promise to thee, that is too little: he gives himself and Spirit, and can he do more? Yes, we cannot drink in all that goodness and love; hence he gives eternity to thee, and he shall more and more enlighten thee: not only let thy soul live to bless him, but thy poor body, and every dust of it, to be raised up to glory with him. What the Lord promised to Abraham, "In blessing I will bless," that portion is thine. O now love him without measure. "O how I love thy law!" how did David love it? I cannot tell; but if he loved the word of Christ, then much more the person of Christ, the presence of Christ, everlasting fellowship with Christ. O take heed of giving Christ, and measuring out unto Christ his portion, his allowance, that when the Lord comes to you for more love (as he doth daily) you give him that answer which many do

do in their practice, you have let him have as much as you can: so that you cannot spare any more from yourselves, from a base world, from wife, and child, and creature, from a slothful course: you hope the Lord will accept of that little he hath. I confess that a little water in a spring is better than much that comes by land floods, but be sure it be a spring, else not accepted. Beloved, time was you lived without Christ, did nothing for him: now you do; and what thou dost this year, didst last year, and no more: Will you thus stint the Lord? Either do more, give more, or mourn you cannot: O one life, one heart is too little for him. It hath put me to sad fears of many men's estates to see this frame, a world of sin without measure every day: where is the christian that loves the Lord every day? how can any then say much is forgiven, when they do not love much.

7. He loves thee now in glory, there hath prepared a place for thee, John xiv. 1, 2, 3. where he longs for thee, John xvii. 24. You know Pharaoh's butler when exalted to his place, forgot poor Joseph. One would think now the Lord Jesus is in glory, and hath God, and angels, and his kingdom to content him, he shall never look after such a worm, such a poor helpless creature as thee. But as the High Priest carried the names on his breast, and precious stones, so the Lord Jesus hath thy name writ upon his very heart. O now love him when he exalts thee to glory, to give the kingdom of heaven on earth with peace and quietness. When Germany lies in blood, and eastern churches slain by the dragon, devoured by the Turk, when England's lights and lamps are going out, no people have such peace, such glory, in so small a time. Beloved, now where is love? The churches of Christ never lost their love so much as when they had their peace, and have been sixteen hundred years a-learning by afflictions and persecutions, how to enjoy their peace, and to have their
love

love smell as sweet as when beaten most, and yet have not, but like the globe without the cross in the emblem rolling and running farther and farther from God, *in cruce quies*. O unreasonable to love him least whom he tenders most. Does not prayer grow cold for the name of Christ? then love grows cold. Does not plenty of means make thy soul-flight means? when you went many miles to hear, and had scarce bread at home, O you thought if once you had such liberties! but when they are made yours, now what fruit. Dost not fail in affections to saints? O love dies, Christ deals not so with thee, and who knows but in rocks and mountains of the wilderness thou mayest lament these evils which peace breed now?

8. He loves thee so as when any evil touches thee, he has a feeling of it, and is grieved at it, Judg. x. 16. Isa. lxiii. 9. nay, he then comforts thee most, both in them, and by them, John xiv. 27. "Not as the world gives peace, so I give it to you:" O then grieve thou for those evils that betide him, the wrongs that others offer him, but especially the unkindness thy own soul shews him, Mark v. 3. He "mourned for the hardness of their heart," Eph. iv. 29, 30. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth," and "grieve not the Holy Ghost," Heb. iii. 10. "Forty years long was I grieved because they erred;" I confess you will wrong him, but will you, must you be impenitent too? Did his enemies grieve him on earth, and shall his friends grieve him in heaven, and no sorrows, no secret tears? Is there no good nature? But what, is there no spirit of mourning? It may be many a day and week hast thou grieved him, and not a sign to any purpose to ease thee of thy sin, but what has eased thee in thy sin. O now comfort his heart again after thou hast most grieved him; comfort his spirit that is dying, sighing in thee; as he comforts thee by thy troubles, comfort him by making a right use of all thy sins to be

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be more humble, more vile, to love him the more, and love thyself the less, as the prodigal son, Luke xv. 18, 20, 24.

9. He loves thee so, that though he departs, he will not, does not stay long from thee, though you may think it long, Isa. liv. 7. Hence it is wonder to see when heart gone, love lost, life lost, yet suddenly thou art brought down on thy knees: O it is the Lord that does it: Thou wast in sorrow of heart, he did not stay long, but came and comforted thee; thou wast in thy sins, it was not long but he delivered thee; thou wast in want of knowledge of him, it has not been long but that he has revealed the Lord to thee; thou hast been in afflictions and troubles, it has not been long but he has heard thee: So give him the like love. I know you will fall from him in love, in delight, in care; but do not stay long from him. Sometimes the baits of the world will draw thee from him when thou hast thy ease and peace; O think it was better with me once than now; when fears drive thee from him, yet return, 1 Sam. xii. 21. 22. O here is that which hardens hearts, breaks your peace, and grieves the Lord so as he is forced to send many sad afflictions, because you lye in your falls: O be not long, nor far from him. He returns to thee when thou art most unkind to him: return when he is ever kind. He returns to thee though he has no need of thee, thou hast of him: "He will not leave thee:" O leave not him.

10. He has from before all worlds loved thee, when no reason for it, Jer. xxxi. 1, 2, 3. Thou hast neglected to love him long, all thy youth, nay it may be all thy life; O you beloved of the Lord, begin to do it now, when there is all reason for it, when heaven calls for it, earth calls for it, ordinances plead for it, Spirit saith come, and calls for it too. It may be thy life is not long. What not yet?

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Quest.

Quest. But how shall I come to do this, thus to love the Lord.

Ans. The Lord only can plant, can water this grace, yet because the Lord does it by means, I will give you some now.

1. Labour to find out the true sweetness, and to taste the bitterness of the deceitful sweetness of all creatures; for this is a rule in reason, a man's affections, like streams must run some way: and it is a rule in theology, stop the affections from running to the creature, and in a sincere heart it will run unto Christ, Hos. ii. 6, 7. if it be from all creatures: Now then the affection is turned from the creature, when it finds the bitterness of the deceiving sweetness of it: and secondly, finds out the real sweetness of it; for make it as a rule, when a man's heart cannot love Christ (unless it be when it is benumbed) it is because he has somewhat else to joy his heart; now let the creature yield you no more joy, and Christ has your love: indeed you may and must joy in the real sweetness of it, and this will encrease, and not diminish your love.

Quest. What is the real sweetness of the creature?

Ans. Christ's love: O see this, if Christ should not love thee, would not thy life be death, thy salvation from many dangers be damnation, thy friends miserable comforters, thy joys sorrows? what good would any thing do thee if thou hadst these thoughts, all these I have, but wrath with them? What comfort can a man take in his feast, if news were then brought that after it is done, you must go to the stake to be burnt? You that joy in your pastimes, one frown of Christ would blast all. O see this, Psalm lxiii. "Thy loving-kindness is better than life, in thy favour is life." Now joy for this, and this will knit your heart nearer to him. For Jesus' sake ponder this point.

Now 2. Taste the bitterness of the sweetness remaining

maining now it is distilled ; and Satan shews a three-fold sweetness, before, in, and after the enjoying of it.

Now 1. Before, remember how they have drawn away and held thy heart from God, done thee more hurt than all afflictions, many a sweet smile hadst thou had from God, but for them.

2. In the enjoying of it, it is sweet, but when it is sweet to thee, it is then most bitter to the heart of God ; when thy joy is kindled, the Lord's sorrow is stirred up and provoked.

3. After. 1. It will draw thy heart from God : and 2. It will be bitter in thy belly at last. Whatever sweetness draws thee from the love of Christ, O it will be bitter, Rom. vi. 21. Chew upon this, and see if any thing here be worthy of your joy, and if not, then return to your first husband.

II. Taste the all-sufficiency of the love of Christ : a woman that is not content with her husband's love, she will not love him as it is fit. So when other things make love to us, and the Lord's love is not enough, Cant. i. 4. " More than wine : " hence " the upright love thee. " Do but sit down and think what this is : If once he loves thee, whatever he can he will do for thee, he will order all thy life, not one thing shall hurt thee, every thing in providence shall work for thy glory, sins, sorrows, &c. so as thou shalt say his denials are better than his gifts, his blows better than smiles, his withdrawings better than his presence, these evils better than joys, and when once he loves me, he will never leave me, that come life, come death, I am safe. O taste this !

III. See the Lord Jesus now as he is, and in truth this were enough to make any profane heart love him, much more a saint espoused to him, but the Lord has hid himself from their eyes, shall he be so, is he so from yours ? 1 Pet. i. 8. " When seeing not " with bodily eyes, but with faith, ye love him," 1

John iii. 1, 2, 3. "We shall see him as he is." Why suppose the day of doom was come, Christ in the clouds, and all creatures before him, all angels ministering to him, in all the glory of his Father; O then the love of Christ, O one smile, one word of Christ would be precious. Lord that men should be in a dream! See Christ a little higher set in his throne, a place more glorious, though less seen, in all the glory of his Father, all mighty angels ministering to him, all the world put into his hand, doing what he will, and all he will; why will you not love him now? Is the gospel a fable? say so if it be, then love him not if you can. When Simeon and the wise men saw him, though but in his abasement, they honoured him, much more now if see him in glory. It is a question whether the beams of the sun are fire: Some demonstrate it thus: Take a glass and gather together the beams, it burns. Therefore so if you would see so as to be affected, gather together the beams of his glory and love; thus you see the means to get fit love, and if it be lost, O now get it again, lest the Lord strain for it, else you are not fit; and if it be not any love that suffices, much less no love, as in many of you: but consider, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "He that loves not Christ, let him be accursed:" O that this might be won from you, O little love goes out to Christ, who sees it not? Ordinances of Christ, men are weary of them; the truths of Christ, despise them; the servants of Christ, they quarrel with them. Now recover your love, the Lord help you so to do.

S E C T. III.

Exhort. 3. **T**O do the work of Christ, to be daily at it, and finishing of it; for look as it was with the head, it is so with all the members that are to remain a while in this life, they have some work to do for the

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the Lord ; some common, some special work, and when that is done, now they are ready to return home again. Hence John xvii. 4, 5. " I have finished the " work," and now he stands at the door and knocks, and is ready for entrance, " Now glorify me with " thyself ;" and you shall find a faithful heart will neither be willing nor ready to go till this is done.

Quest. What is this work I am to do ?

Ans. I have answered this elsewhere at large, yet these two things I would say,

1. That a man's chief work lies not in facile duties : for though grace and Christ's Spirit makes duties easy, his yoke easy ; yet there is a contrary spirit that will make them hard and difficult at first.

2. Lest I should leave you unsatisfied altogether, we shall find a christian life is carried with a double motion : 1. In seeking of God in his ordinances. 2. Or in walking with God out of his ordinances ; these are joined together, Gen. vi. 8, 9. Noah found grace, hence sought it, though not in the eyes of the world : and hence Noah walked with God. Hence we see Christ was sometime in the mount alone, sometime abroad going up and down doing good. Moses in the mount and in the camp too. Now look as before a man is justified, his chief work then is to seek God in his ordinances for a principle : so a soul now espoused to Christ is to walk with Christ : now walking implies constant following of another, or a continual work ; so Christ has work for you every moment. Hence in every company, time, place, temptation, enquire thus : Am I not like to lose my time, my heart, Christ's honour ? What work has Christ for me to do ? hold here, for here lies your work. Look as an ambitious man asks, how serves this for my honour, and Satan how he may dishonour Christ ; so do you ask, how you may honour him, Rom. vi. 19. " As you have given yourselves instruments of " iniquity," &c. And now because we live in times
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and places wherein men have so much work of their own to do, that Christ is neglected, wherein very few walk with God. Hence men taking men's examples for patterns and copies of their course, content themselves to do as others do: And this being a close act, mainly consisting in what is unseen; and because men are apt to put off Christ with desires, and serve Satan indeed, and because apt to resolve all religion into some two or three duties or graces, and because men's hearts are catching at comforts and promises, but commands tedious and burdensome; I shall press this upon these motives; only here let me premise when I press you to this, it is not to a covenant of works, as though you could act yourselves, but we look to Christ's blood and Spirit to set on things; I speak to them under grace, who have the Spirit without, and faith within to act and carry them here. But

Mot. 1. Whose work will you do? you cannot cease to do Christ's work, but you must do your own work, (I speak not for idleness) *i. e.* you must serve your lust; now consider what good did thyself ever do thee, nay Satan never such as thy own self: and will you fall down to such an image! Shall thy lusts have content more and rather than Christ?

2. Consider the Lord will take care and charge of thee, to do thy work, to bring about thy ends for thee, do but thou do his. Martha was cumbered about many things, hence forsook the better part: so men neglect, forget Christ's work, because of so many distractions of their own. What will become of my hundred talents? what will become of my wife, child? Now do you take care of the Lord's work, take that for your charge, and the Lord will take charge of you. The best, readiest, and only way to have your own ends, is to seek the Lord's, and forget your own. As in Solomon, his great work and care was to rule a state well, and the Lord gave all the rest. Set thy face to the sun, and these shadows will follow you.

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The servant takes charge of his master's work, and he need not trouble himself for meat and drink, and *e contra*.

First, there shall not any evil hurt thee, whereas else thy good things shall, Isa. xxvii. 3.

Secondly, All creatures in heaven and earth shall serve that man that serves his God, Hos. ii. 21, 23. whereas else they groan under thee.

Thirdly, Angels shall come out of heaven to guard thee.

Fourthly, Nay the Lord Jesus himself shall stand at the top of the ladder, that when every thing else shall leave thee, he shall then bring the best wine at the last, he will be a portion to thee, Psal. xvi. Phil. iii. 8.

3. Consider that the more difficult any duty is, the more sweetness shall you receive if you break through it; men plead difficulty, I plead gain. Hence he that overcomes shall eat of the hidden manna; Hence never any so comforted, honoured as Christ, because never any went through so hot a work for the Father as Christ, Phil. ii. You plead the difficulty of a christian life, and taste not the sweetness of that life; if you can do no more than what is easy, and pleaseth self, the Lord will never let you taste the sweetness of pleasing him. Have you not sometimes found your hearts dead to prayer? yet you fell to it, and then would not but have took the season for a world.

4. Consider, let the duty be to nature impossible, yet the Lord is at hand to help, even when no strength, Isa. xl. 29. Nay, Heb. xi. 34. "Out of weakness were made strong." If you had no Christ, no Spirit, no promises to assure you of help, you might then cease acting, and say it is impossible I should ever overcome such evils, attain to that measure; but when promises to assure, and Christ and Spirit at hand, now to plead impossibility, is to reproach the Lord; to think he will set his people to make brick, and give them no straw: nay, to war against God, and to make the

the Lord war against you, Numb. xiv. You know how they cried out of impossibilities, and now the Lord's anger rose when they were ready to enter Canaan: So when men are ready to enter upon possession of Christ, and promises, then impossibilities appear. Consider therefore what the Lord did for David, Gideon, Sampson, who went out in the name and Spirit of the Lord, and were helped: If you were under the law, you might plead this, but under grace it is horrible to make this excuse.

5. Consider if the Lord do not help (as he will be free) yet he will accept thy will, I know he will not accept the wishes of servants, yet he will accept the will of sons; neither will he accept the will of sons in a work they might have strength from him to do, and go not to him for it; but in that case he will, as 2 Cor. xii. 9. *i. e.* it is enough, I accept thee: and this is very sweet, that for his own sake he should be pleased as well with the will as with the work; for this is that which troubles, I would have help, the Lord gives none; why the Lord accepts of it as if thou didst it, as in David's building a temple: For a christian's work is done two ways:

First, Sometimes by feeling, when we feel help.

Secondly, Sometimes by faith, by going to another for it: and this the Lord accepts most mercifully; for this is his victory over all sin, even his faith. When we see a duty hard, and do not go to the Lord for help, then we are overcome properly; for out of the abundance of the heart the person acts for Christ.

6. Consider the Lord will honour thee (though the work doth not. John xii. 26. "Him will my Father honour," both in this life, Rom. ii. 29. and in that to come. Now, as it is in acting parts, it is no matter what fellow-actors think, God is the great spectator, God will esteem of thee, and conscience shall witness as much when no eye sees, or when men see and judge amiss, yet the Lord approves; and at the

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great day before men, angels, and all the world, 1 Cor. iv. 5. "Then shall every man have praise of God:" and hence Mat. xxv. Christ's judgment is made according to the works of his people: because then they shall not be compared with themselves and their sins, but with the wicked: and hence to set out their glory, he reckons up all they have done. All men in all their acts seek to avoid shame, and attain honour: now if you did know a way for all men in the world to honour you, would you not attend it? what is their dreams to God's honour? Hence not one act but is now chronicled, Mal. iii. 16. and afterward rewarded, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Oh then give content to the Lord.

7. Consider the peace you shall have by this means, both while you live, and when you die: what is the cause of so many doleful clamours of conscience, but a loose careless heart, the Lord is neglected; that when one pleads faith, it will be replied, the true faith is the "faith of the Son of God." Now is the faith of God a careless faith, a secure, worldly, impenitent, dead faith? you may sit down, and rise again, and say true, yet I will believe, so you may, but it will be with such a trembling spirit as you will find no peace: Neither do I know how any can keep his peace otherwise; for there are children but still-born; if born a living son, thou wilt live to God, necessarily I must do it: But by this means, O there is unspeakable peace, Mat. xi. 29, 30. Hence Paul, "I have finished my work," &c. John xiv. 21.—24. you live without God, and walk without God, and pray without God, but there is a day approaching that you shall appear before the Lord Jesus, you shall wish then, O that I had lived so and so! O do that now.

8. Consider the Lord will have it done, it must be done; hence Paul said, "Necessity lies upon me, and woe to me," &c. the Lord should be forsworn if he should not bring you to it, Luke i. 73, 74, 75. "Ac-

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“ cording to the oath,” &c. Beloved, you think lazy desires will serve: no, it must be done: you say, I cannot; it must be better with you. And hence look for a rod, and that the Lord will bring you into great affliction till all is removed, and so purge you; and if one affliction will not do it, then worse shall come, he loves you better than so. And remember you have had warning this day: you came hither for the Lord’s work, and now your own justles it out: look that God will take away the kingdom from you, or set oppressors over you, or send some stings among you; and then say, O I may thank my walking unworthy of God and gospel for this.

9. Consider else you shall make the blood of Christ shed of no effect, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Now wicked men need not fear this, no blood shed for them. Will you do so? God forbid: The Jews have killed him, will you drag him up and down the streets, trample on his blood, and put him to open shame?

10. Consider your time is but short, and you have done but little work, and it is not long but that your crown shall be put upon your head. It is noted of Enoch, Gen. v. that he walked with God three hundred years, (and that having sons and daughters, having family-contentments, and incumbrances,) and he lived the shortest time. I am sure angels are content to come out of heaven to do the work of God: what, not do it here? Paul thought himself born too soon because for a time he lived without Christ. O but now make trial, and you will find it the sweetest life, that you will say, why have I neglected this so long? and if thou dost not find seven times more peace therein than in all the world, never set foot here.

Quest. How shall I thus do the work of Christ?

Ans. I. “ Without Christ you can do nothing,” John xv. 5. The sun runs still because it is light of itself; so when the Lord is in you, you will do so. Hence go not out to any duty in your own strength; for

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for then you will either not do it, or not hold out in it: No man can hold out at his work that feeds not abundantly on his meat, so here: and here note but these two things.

1. Do not only in ordinances do thus, but out of ordinances then, as in particular times of trial (for the Lord will not give you in an ordinance as much grace as shall serve you out of it) lift up your hearts to Christ, and say as Christ, "Father, the hour is come, now glorify thy name," John xii. 28. So Lord, here is work to do, but a dead heart to do, but a dead heart is upon me, Lord glorify thy name. I have seldom seen but the Lord either helped then, or at some other time when thou didst come, and then the Lord puts thee in remembrance that it is out of respect to that.

2. Thus coming and feeding on the Lord Jesus, believe that he will help, and that shall be so; some have never got strength against sin till then, but this has conquered difficulties, Rom. viii. 37, 38. "In all these things we overcome, for I am perswaded," &c. So you coming helpless to a Christ, all his strength is yours by covenant. Be perswaded he cannot go from his word: but yet we must use other means sanctified by Christ; for Christ worketh by means. And therefore,

II. Find out where the cause of all your negligence and sloth lies in not doing the Lord's work, nay of your doing Satan's work. It may be you will say, you cannot; I know there is that in saints in parts, but this is not the main, therefore I will tell you thus,

1. Before conversion the main wound of men is their will, *Video meliora probog; dexteriora sequor*: Hence John viii. 44. "His lusts ye will do." Hence Mat. xxiii. 37. "You would not:" they say hence we have a will; I say no. And hence we answer that great objection for possibilities to keep all laws by universal grace, which it is unjust to punish for not do-

ing that a man cannot do. We answer, There is a double impotency. *Ex infirmitate*, or *Ex malignitate*, when men will not, Prov xi. 12, 13.

2. Hence it follows after conversion, though the will is changed, so that a man would, but cannot do many things, *Ex infirmitate*, yet the great cause why he cannot do more is from the remnant of malignity not yet removed. A man will sleep, he loves it, and secretly loaths the ways of the Lord : Hence the church, Isa. lxiii. 17. complains of this. A man shall find his heart wills the end exceedingly, but when he comes to will the means, there his heart is weary of them, and loaths them ; a man will be careless, and this being not seen is not fought against. Sin is vilified, and hence the enemy to all good remains still. It is an old rule, *Tantum possumus, quantum volumus*. Get Christ to help here.

3. Make this your last end, to live unto Christ, and to do his work : Hence Paul did not account his life dear ; this is your last end ; for the end of being born by faith, nay of being redeemed by blood, it is to live unto Christ, Tit. ii. 11. When you cry for faith, and peace, and assurance, that is not your end, for he that does so is a very hypocrite, and has a false heart, but it is to live to Christ : Hence Paul, Phil. iii. 9, 10, 12, 13. sought to be found in him, but further to know him, &c. The Father is glorified in our bringing forth much fruit. Hence make it your last end, and then your happiness will lie in acting thus, and that is a man's happiness he is carried to with most infinite delight. For pious people to do Christ's work, their hearts are dead, tell them the Lord Jesus shall have a name by what they do for him, yet dead, because that is not their last end. But come to this, now it will do ; a man cannot bear a cross, yet let him consider, the Lord shall gain though I do not ; so for faith, so for any other duty. Men think it good,

good but not their greatest good. Hence see Christ better than thyself, and his honour better than thyself, and his honour better than thy glory forever. Hence the Lord denies us help, because we ask it for our lusts, not for himself, James iv. 3.

4. Keep those glorious apprehensions of the Lord and his ways, which you have sometimes in an ordinance: You are sometimes near the Lord, and you then see a beauty in Christ, in his ways, and then thinkest shall I ever wrong him more? then shall you come and lose your light, and so you ever lose your strength and life. Hence Eph. v. 11. It is as with a man that eats, but he looseth and spends his spirits, he can do no more work, but faints away: see 2 Pet. ii. 9. Steven can be content to have stones about his ears, when he can say, "I see Jesus." And hence when those glorious apprehensions come into your minds, stamp them there; for set up other images of other things, your minds and your hearts will bow down every moment to them. Does not Christ's Spirit do all? yes, but by this medium, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "As by the Spirit of the Lord."

S E C T. IV.

Use 4. AFTER you have done your work be ever humble, and be ready to give the Lord the honour of his grace, that ever he gave any thing to you, that ever he did any thing by you; for the last end of all the elect, it is to admire and honour the riches of God's grace, Eph. i. 5, 6. Hence the fall was permitted; never should grace have been seen, if sin and misery had not come in. Now if this be our last end in glory, then the heart is ready to have immediate fellowship with Christ there, when it is ready to act for its last end. Hence it is frequent in the Psalms, when David was in any strait, wanted any mercy, nay the presence of the Lord here, this is the last end he pursues,

pursues, the last word he speaks before the Lord, "My soul shall bless thee," as Psal. lxxiii. 3, 4. and hence when all his enemies were subdued, and he ready to lay all in the dust, he gives the Lord all, 2 Sam. xxii. *per totum*. and xxiii. 5. Beloved, this is heaven's work; O learn this song before you go there, which none can learn but the redeemed and sealed of the Lord, Rev. xiv. 3. John i. xiv. It is writ of Christ, he was "full of grace and truth;" do you ever think to meet with him, that get not your hearts full of the sense of it?

Before I come therefore to press this, I shall premise these two things,

First, That the Lord in all his dealings with his people, seeks lastly to bring about the glory of his grace: he regards nothing men do, if at last they deny him this; he respects not what sins and evils men have, if at last he gets this, for this is his last end: hence all he doth to his people, for his people, by his people, it is for this. And hence

1. He leaves them a long time in their graves and sins, that they live like other men, which is strange, that he that has loved them so long, should leave them so long to be as bad as any, yet this he doth, because it makes for the praise of his grace, Ephes. ii. 4, 7, 8. "Dead in sin, that in ages to come," &c. And this doth so confound God's people, that they wish not only heaven, but earth, and ages to come may record this love.

2. Hence out of men fallen, he picks out usually the poorest and vilest, the younger brother less loved out of a family, leaves elder, Rom. ix. 11. and "the foolish, and weak things, and things that are not, that no flesh might glory, but in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 26, 31. and this is strange that the Lord should chuse thus, but this he doth to blur the glory of all the world.

3. Hence the Lord saves by faith, and justifies by faith,

faith, and seals by faith, Eph. i. 13. and sanctifies by faith, and glorifies by faith, 1 Pet. i. 3. So that all a christian's life is a beggar's life, and it is strange the Lord should chuse the basest, poorest grace to save by; and the end is the glory of his grace, Rom. iv. 16. It is of faith that it might be of grace.

4. The Lord leaves many wants in his people, under which they sit sighing, and that sometime very long, refuseth to hear their prayers, that they may repair to the throne of grace, and so in conclusion bless grace, Heb. iv. 16.

5. Hence the Lord takes away sometimes those feelings, those enlargements they had, and baits them with most vexing sins, and pricking distempers, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 9. and it is to advance grace.

6. Hence the Lord is sometimes angry with his people, and hides his face from them, that if ever he returns in love, his grace may be the sweeter, and last the longer, Isa. liv. 7. Nay, hence sometimes strips them so of all that they have had, or can do, that if you ask what have you now to say for yourselves? nothing but grace, their mouths are stopt. Hence Psalm vi. "Lord save me for thy mercies sake." Psalm li. 11. "According to the multitude of thy mercies," &c.

7. Hence the Lord speaks peace to his people, that they may say, I was so vile, and yet loved; O grace! O love! Ezek. xvi. 63. When they see nothing but shame, and shame covers them, and are afraid to appear before God, it is for this end. I will name no more. Do you not observe it? Sometimes you shall find the Lord so strangely carrying matters, as if he did not love nor care for his people, against the hair and grain of their desires, and when all comes to winding up, it is to advance grace. All a man's good days, and bad days, all God's frowns and smiles, all the Lord's food and phyfic, all God cares for, works, plots for, it is to do his people no more hurt than this,

this, to advance his grace in them, and by them. All his hewings and hammerings of you, nay his knocking you to pieces, and new melting, and new casting of you, it is that you may be vessels of his glorious grace, that you may be able to live in the air of God's grace, to suck in, and breath out grace; and let all the power of hell seek to blur it, yet grace shall conquer. Who would not be under grace? O poor creature! Satan is tempting, sin vexing, yet grace must reign.

Secondly, This I say, that God's own people do by strange ways and courses deny the Lord, and deprive the Lord of the glory of his rich grace; for that being the diamond in God's crown, and the beloved attribute which God intends to advance, all the policy of hell is against this; this is the reason why Satan's enmity is so bitter against faith, as in Peter; and observe, however there be many temptations, his end is to crush faith: the reason is, as it is with an enemy, if the besieged has water brought to the city by pipes, he cuts off them and stops them; so faith fetching all from grace, and returning all to grace, hence faith is opposed most; and hence the unregenerate part will take Satan's part, and doth strangely rob the Lord of the glory of this; though I confess the Lord will have it for all that they seek to scatter it, Isa. xliii. 21, 22. It is strange to see how few plot for the praise of grace; hence how many are straitned, nay do cross Christ in this. As

1. If the Lord give them not what grace they would, then they slight what little he bestows; and if he gives them much, then they solace themselves in it, and grow puffed up and proud. It is the temper of God's own people to set up such a measure of God's grace and Spirit which they would have, and therein they do well: Paul, Phil. iii. 11. looked to the resurrection of the dead; but if the Lord denies them that, (as he will make his people live from
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hand to mouth) they slight what they have, either as if all were but hypocrisy, or because it is but little, not so much as they would have, and herein they do ill; for here the Lord loseth the glory of some grace, for it is grace that you have the least desires after; nay that you do but know what it is and see the want of it, and yet ever complaining, and never rejoicing; for every degree of grace in saints, is virtually saving, though formally common. But suppose the Lord fills the bottle full, and gives as much peace, affections, enlargements of heart, as it has almost required, (for there are spring-tides, and over-flowing times of God's Spirit,) now they are ready to swell, and be puffed up above measure, as Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7. "Lest I should be exalted above measure;" for there is self-love in saints. Hence they desire an excellency in themselves: hence when they find none of their own, they are apt to deck and set out themselves with what the Lord has done, and so to joy in this, and now to think themselves better than others of God's saints, whereas they should be more vile, and advance grace the more, Eph. iii. 8. "To me the least of saints." And hence the Lord after greatest deliverances and mercies sends great sorrows, as to them in the wilderness. Hence the Lord takes away affections, and they die, that grace might be the more advanced.

2. If the sins of their hearts are common, and cannot be removed, and so seem little, then they pass them by, and never take notice of them, God will pardon them, and hence the Lord has sad times of reckoning (with a rod in his hand) with his own people, Ezek. vi. 9. That those loose times are heavy times, this is for my neglect, &c. but hereby grace loseth glory; for how can they see how deeply they are indebted to the Lord, if they see not their debt? on the other side, if their sins be very violent, and their distempers so strong, that

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they

they think none like me, now their hearts sink, and die away, and grow discouraged, and all the use they make is this, I think it will never be better with me, and can there be life for me so dead, deliverance, redemption for me in such bondage, love for one that cannot but loath myself, and if others did know me, they would do so too. Can the Lord love me now? Yes, beloved, that he can and will, Isa. lxiii. 16. "Though Abraham know us not, yet," &c. But here is your sin, when you should make this use of all, to feel the more need of grace to pity, and say, the more precious shall grace be to me forever: your hearts now sink. The Lord brings his people into very low condition to humble them, and to shew them more of his grace, Psal. lxxviii. 19. "Can God prepare a table?" they spake therein against God: so it is here; for herein the Lord's grace is seen, to love them when lepers.

3. Grace that has been shewn for times past, they forget it, 2 Pet. i. 9. And what is this but destroying God's grace? for why is grace so precious at first conversion, that heaven and earth are too little to hold praises enough for it? And afterward, the Lord has little love, O you forget what once you were, and what the Lord has done, hence 1 Tim. i. 13, 14. I was so and so, &c. but now have received abundant grace. You have had many meetings with God, many answers from God, many consolations and times of refreshing and reviving, and these forgotten and buried, the life of them after a year or two expired. And what is this but eclipsing God's grace? On the other side, as for grace for time to come, they fear it, especially when worms and no men in their own eyes. Hence saith God, "Fear not, worm Jacob," Isa. xli. 14. There is a certain divining spirit (as one once told me), that until that was pulled out, no honour can the Lord get. Before you come to word or prayer, thou wilt fear thou shalt never get any good; and

and when the Lord gives any, thou wilt fear thou shalt never hold out; and what promise soever is made, thou wilt fear thou shalt never find it. And what does this but eclipse grace? we should go with boldness to the throne of grace; nay, hence, let the Lord send never so much mercy for the present, a fear will cut off all, that all this will rise up in judgment against me.

4. When they are most fit to honour God's grace by faith, now they will not believe, not then above any other time: for then a man is most fit to honour grace, when he feels most need of it: and when hath he most need, but when he feels most emptiness? why now above any other time a man will not come in, but will have somewhat in himself first, and then he will, when his heart is so and so sweetly settled, &c. Hence Luke xiv. poor, and blind, and lame, and halt compelled to come in: one would think there needed not that; but now when fittest, now they will not: for let any man observe what would endear his heart so much to grace as this: to think if it be the Lord's mind to save a poor, dead, damned creature, then happy I? This is wonderful, this hath quickened dead love, and dead faith, and a dead heart. And on the other side, if the Lord delay, if it comes not at their own time, then they distrust it: Grace! alas! I feel myself never a whit better: For there be two things in faith,

First, A coming to Christ, which is our work, *i. e.* God's work in us.

Secondly, Receiving what I come for from Christ, which is the Lord's work: Now the first gives evidence he shall have it, John vi. 35, 37. Hence the Lord will have them rejoice in what Christ hath, as, "my grace is sufficient;" but if it comes not presently, then they cast off faith, and so cast away grace, I feel no good: hence John iv. 48, &c. I know there is a

seeming coming to Christ, to have the grace of Christ and sin too, and this you may well cast off: and a coming for his grace and Spirit only, and you despise grace, and distrust the Lord if you cast off this, or you seek to put the Lord out of his working by a covenant of grace, (where he takes his time as he pleases) and give a flat lie to all promises of grace, and refuse to be contented with Christ's grace, that thou mightest have the more attributed to thyself, and the Lord the less.

5. Either they think not of the exceeding greatness of the Lord's love and free grace to them; and hence Paul bows to heaven for this, Eph. iii. 16, 17. And hence it comes to pass, that look as it is with sweet things, swallow them down in the lump, you never taste the sweetness to purpose, nor never commend them; so it is when men swallow down God's love, and chew not upon it; whereas if they did but think of it, O how sweet would it be! Psalm lxiii. 5, 6. Lord how many days and weeks are spent thus? It is apparent you have the profession of a christian life; but do you taste the sweetness of a christian course? No: why if you did think, you would; but you are weary at night, sleepy in the morning, busy in the day, dead on the Sabbath: hence think not, hence give not God the glory of grace: or if they do think of it, and the greatness of it, then they cannot think so great things should be given unto them, or done for them: that God should love me as his son, make me an heir of all he has with him, redeem me that have despised his blood: it is too good news to be true. Hence the disciples believed not for joy, Luke xxiv. 41. Hence when delivered out of Babel, we were in a dream; this robs the Lord of grace; for the greater the love is, and the more you take, the more love shall the Lord have; it cannot be otherwise, if you come to say this is mine.

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distempers, and miseries, and never look unto Christ the brazen serpent, and search for a righteousness of their own, and cannot find it, and hence pore still. As when men have wounds, they only think on them, that when awakened out of sleep, they complain in their beds like the Israelites, *Exod. vi. 9.* that would not hear Moses because of anguish. As the impotent man answered Christ, *John v. 5, 6, 7.* "Wilt be made whole?" he turns his eyes upon his misery, "I have none else to help me at the time;" here is but this means, and when I come myself, others step in before me, &c. Now so do men, and never look beyond means, the Lord can, the Lord will, and so eye not him: or on the other side, if they get healing of their wounds, then they eye Christ only, *Eph. ii. 6.* They were exalted in heavenly places, yet remember, as *ver. 11, 12.* For let any christian see he is poor and miserable, but he is not much affected with it, nor afflicted with it, and so eye Christ, and trust to Christ, and ease himself here, and say we must look only to Christ, either you will hear of his fall (yea and himself shall find a decay) or he will grow very proud, unfit to give all to Christ. Is there grace here?

7. Either if the Lord gives him any thing himself and mercy, he will now add something of his own to Christ, and pull the veil of the law over the face of the glory of Christ, *Gal. i. 6.* or else do nothing at all for him, unless it be when the good fit takes him, under a pretence that Christ must do all; as here the five wise virgins that fell asleep: and thus you see how grace is opposed by the children of grace. Now therefore my exhortation is, to take heed of this, and be ever ready to attribute all to the Lord, as they cried when the second temple was building from beginning to the end, *Zec. iv. 6, 7.* so that thou wast feared so long, that called by means that the Lord should by faith accept, that he should speak peace,
this

this is grace, that though vile, yet he will save me: it is grace, that though I can do nothing, yet he will help me, and afterwards crown me: O this is wonderful grace! And

First, Do not only give the Lord the glory of grace to redeem you from misery; for this you may do, and be full ready to give it, yet perish at last, as the Israelites that sang God's praises did, but that he will save thee from greater, *i. e.* from sin. And

Secondly, Not only when you feel nothing, but when you feel most, O to honour grace! And

Thirdly, Not to do it coldly, but with a heart inflamed with a sense of it, that I live, I have, I do, I am what I am: O it is grace. So that now if the Lord shall come and ask you, what will you say, if I will deliver you from all misery, subdue all sins, pass by all wrong, hear all prayers, do all good to thee, do much good by thee, love thee every moment, give a kingdom when thy work is done to thee, and myself better than all? say, Lord I can never recompence this, I shall be, I hope, the more vile in my own eyes forever, and give all to grace. O sing that song, or get that song by heart now; for Rev. vii. 10. there is a song, "Salvation to the Lamb," which none else could sing. This is our work, and a great work indeed.

Quest. *How shall I do this?*

Ans. 1. Get a new light from the Lord to shew you clearly the infinite, endless, unknown evil of the least sin; Paul was a proud Pharisee until he saw sin, and Jer. iii. 24, 25. for if sin be seen one smile, one day, nay a moment's breathing-time in this world will be matter of amazement to thee after all thou hast, and hast done: much more when thou seest so many sins, and that in every thing: Intreat the Lord to do this. We walk up and down the world, and say we sin and grieve the Lord; but O! it is not known; happy art thou if the Lord has discovered it; then thou wilt say,

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say, Why doth the Lord do any thing for me? could not he pick out stones, nay toads that never sinned against him, rather than me to enjoy him, especially is sin vile in thee, so near God, and so near heaven too. Angels were hurled down for one sin.

2. Set a high price upon a little grace; a man will be exceeding humbly thankful for the giving a little of that which he highly esteems, much more for giving much of what we value. The poor woman of Canaan, Mat. xv. was glad of crumbs. How thankful do you think she was for loaves? that made her ready to receive all; "Be it as thou wilt;" so it shall be with you; for if you prize a little, O when all shall be given, this will swallow you up into grace. And it is certain, there is never a mercy but it is great, if you consider him that gives it, who receives it, him that bought it. But the most of God's grace in us appears to be but small; hence we prize it not, and hence never ready to give all to the Lord again.

3. Learn to put a difference between your double being: for every Christian has a double being: 1. In himself. 2. He has a subsistence in Christ. Now look upon yourselves as in yourselves, you will ever complain there, ever dead, and never have your hearts ready to bless the Lord. If you only look on yourselves in Christ, you will be proud, and never give the Lord honour. I say therefore, put a difference between these two; for men appropriating to themselves what is Christ's, they rob Christ of his glory. Hence Paul so humble, 1 Cor. xv. 10, 11. For if you look upon yourself, I am dead, guilty, damned, weak, here will be shame; if any life, or grace, this is Christ's. As a man on a mount is the same man, no taller, only the mountain makes him so; so think of thyself. Or as a mud wall, the sun shines on it, but in itself it is a mud-wall still; all the warmth is from the sun.

4. Learn to love grace; what we love we will seek the good of more than our own, and commend it.

First,

First, It is the only first mover of all our good: thou shouldst never have had a drachm of peace or mercy. Why hast it? The Lord will have it so, grace pleads it may be so; this is the only petitioner at court against the cry of sin, against the cry of justice.

Secondly, It is the only support under the heaviest evils; sometimes God frowns, and hell smokes, and Satan tempts, and sin rageth, and it may be no feeling of grace, no reason to shew there shall ever be any; now what have you done, what will you do? Fly for refuge to the promise of grace, Heb. vi. 18. It is such a friend as holds up the head when sinking, when dying holds that, when all fails, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. To him that lays hold on grace, this is wonderful. Paul was a man taken with grace; hence he every where commends it, "I was received to mercy," &c. 1 Tim. i. 13. 14.

5. See how the Lord loves that thou shouldst honour it, for the greatest honour grace has is by faith; hence they are put for one, Rom. iv. 16. and the great cause why faith stirs not, is because he sees not how the Lord shall have by it the praise of his rich grace, nor how the Lord loves it should do so. For if a man did see how by faith he shall honour grace, and how the Lord is pleased with it, it would draw the heart to be assured, and to bless grace; for when the soul feels itself at worst, why doth it not believe? I shall presume: True, if you have this only in your eye to save yourself; but if the Spirit presents the glory of grace, and this draws your will that you will glorify grace, then you will say it is no presumption so to do, and so to believe; for the Lord loves his grace, and all means for the glory of grace. Hence he will use faith for that end, to honour grace. Oh therefore see how the Lord loves to have thee honour it. This gives God's heart full rest; this is that which

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which he desires most, because it is his end : This is that which all the business of the world is for : O see how he loves it ! and then you will love to act thus. Now set upon this last work : look over all your life, and like bees gather honey from every flower, and then come loaden home ; so do you, and look over all the Lord's love, turn over all the leaves of it : The Lord has called me ; Why ? It is because Christ has redeemed ; and why that ? because the Father has chosen ; And why me ? To glorify his grace : And why me rather than another ? No reason, but he would. This I doubt not will be the work of heaven, I am glorified because called, because redeemed, because elected, for none other reason why, and here astonished. You have not christian hearts in you, that will now have no care to do this work there before you are turned off the stage : you poor doubting spirits, that see so much vileness, and cannot be persuaded, be not discouraged. Wait for the Lord, and say, if he shall save, I shall forever love him the more. Now hold here, and be ready to do so, and it is certain thou art a vessel of glory, ready to sing the song of the Lamb, and shalt follow him wherever he goes.

CHAP. IX. SECT. I.

Concerning the Soul's immediate closing with the Person of Christ, as the proper object of saving-faith.

3. *Went forth to meet the Bridegroom.*

HERE needs the explication of three things :

1. *Who is the Bridegroom ?*

Ans. The conclusion of this parable is the explication of this, viz. the Son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who according to the several conditions, or dispositions the church is in, appears to his church under several relations and titles. The church is oppressed

pressed by her enemies, he appears now to her as her prince and king : the church wants wisdom, light, and life, he appears now unto her as an head. The church has been seeking of his love, and yielding herself to the obedience of him as her Lord : at last he appears more fully to her as an husband, or as a bridegroom with whom she is to have her nearest and everlasting fellowship and communion, and so here. And when Christ comes to shew most special love, and to have most special fellowship with his people, he thus styles himself, Isa. liv. 5, 6. So John iii. 29. And when the church has tasted that love, she calls him so.

II. *What is it to meet the Bridegroom?*

Ans. To enjoy fellowship and familiarity with him.

III. *What is it (to go forth to meet) the Bridegroom?*

Ans. There are but three ways of going forth to meet with Christ in scripture.

1. When soul and body at the last day meet the Lord in the clouds of the air, 1 Thes. iv. 17. Thus the whole church, the bride, shall appear in glory to meet the bridegroom.

2. When the soul only goes out of the body by the ministry of angels, to meet the Lord in heaven, as Paul that knew not whether in or out of the body, 2 Cor. xii. 3. "We know it here shall go out of the "body:" as Christ is said when he went to heaven, "I go to my Father, and your Father:" so it goes forth then to Christ, Eccles. xii. 7. and neither of these can be meant here: For

First, This shews the state of the Jewish church long before Christ's coming, at least among many of them.

Secondly, Because the shutting out, ver. 10. is by and at death: hence letting in is so too. Now this was before.

3. When the soul goes out of itself by faith: Hence John vi. 35. it is called coming to Christ; and this not any physical natural departing of the soul out of the body, but ethical, supernatural, by the operations of

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of the soul out of itself. And look as the whole soul by unbelief departs from God in Christ, so the whole soul by faith comes again to God by Christ. The mind sees, affections make after him, will fastens on him, and there depends. This is the first work of faith, or the first faith, the coming (as in all motions there are two extremes) of the soul from a nothingness, emptiness in itself, to an allness and fulness in Christ: And as it is in other motions, if there was a *vacuum*, there would be *motus in instanti*; so if there was an emptiness seen in the world, and all the works of it, and in all fears that all mountains were cast down, faith then would suddenly come by the Spirit to the Lord Jesus, and this coming to Christ is not meant here: For

First, These virgins were espoused to Christ by faith already.

Secondly, At the first coming to Christ it goes to the Lord for life in him, and from him; but here, having life already, they go forth to live with him: there the soul goes out to meet him in the gospel, in the promise; here the virgins go forth to meet him in glory. There the soul goes to be justified by him, here the virgins go to be glorified with him: and therefore it is meant of a second going out of the soul by some special acts of faith, after that it does believe, and after it is ready for him. And for explication,

Quest. 1. *From whence doth the soul go?*

Ans. It is chiefly going out of this world by trampling this moon under her feet, by forgetting this her father's house, by a holy contempt of it, and a holy dying to it, and all the glory of it. For it is a thousand to one if Satan does not entangle here, if Lot be not taken with Sodom, though burnt out there; and if this going out is to enjoy the Lord in another world chiefly, then going out is from the opposite term, from this world. Hence Paul singles out this mercy, Gal.

i. 4. Christ gave himself to deliver us from this pre-

sent evil world. O say men, it is a good world, and good being here. It is an evil world: it is so when death comes, but for present it is best. No, it is a "present evil world."

Quest. 2. By what acts of faith doth it go forth?

Ans. There be to affections of the soul that chiefly look to a good absent, yet loving that good, go forth to meet it, those are hope and desire; like the blind man and the lame, both together can make a shift to go. Hope like the eye goes out and looks, desire like the feet runs out and longs. The going forth therefore to meet Christ, is: 1. By a real expectation of him. 2. By a longing desire to be with him. Hope gets on the top of the world, and cries, O I see him, desire stands by, and longs for him, O come Lord. A careless blind world looks not for him, the bride doth, Rev. xxii. 17, 20. "O come Lord Jesus, come quickly;" by love and joy we embrace and entertain the bridegroom, by hope and desire we go forth to meet the bridegroom. Hence many things are to be observed, and yet not all I might.

S E C T. II.

Doct. 1. THAT the object to which faith chiefly looks, and closeth with, is the person of the Lord Jesus.

It is the bridegroom himself that the virgins chiefly have to do withal; they are espoused to him as in marriage; there is a giving of themselves one unto another; they make themselves ready for him, they go out to meet him: It is him they love, it is him they want, it is him they look for, it is him they close withal: Whorish lovers look not after him, but his: His peace to comfort them when in horror and fear, his mercy to save them from eternal flames; but virgins look to him, they look to (His) indeed, but it is himself chiefly they care for, John i. 12. to "so many

“as received him, he gave power to be sons,” John vi. 27. when the people followed him, but it was for loaves: “Labour not for bread that perisheth, but
 “&c. for him hath the Father sealed,” Mat. xiii. 44. The man did not buy the treasure, but bought the field: it is him faith seeks for, Jer. l. 4. “They shall seek
 “the Lord weeping;” it is him faith chuses, and is contented with, “Whom have I in heaven but thee?” Psal. lxxiii. 25. it is him faith glories in, Isa. xlv. 25. “In him shall all the seed of Israel glory.”

S E C T. III.

Reason. 1. **I**T is chiefly and firstly the person of Christ that the Father gives unto the soul, Isa. ix. 6. Hence faith lays hold on him: It is not seemly to keep a portion from any, much less orphans portion. Faith empties a man so as it makes him the poorest orphan in the world; now the father cannot, will not keep back his portion, but gives it him: Wicked men have their portion in this world, Psalm xvii. 14. and they think the Lord loves them because he blesses them: they have many moral excellencies given them, which makes them honoured and lovely in the eyes of men, and they have honour, and that is their reward; they have bread, but not the staff of bread; they have ordinances, but not the Lord in them: the Lord gives them answer to many prayers, but never gives them himself, nor his Son; this is highest love. But it is his Son himself he gives to orphan, fatherless, helpless creatures; for the Lord is their portion, Lam. iii. 24. The “portion of Jacob,” Jer. x. 16. Hence it is him that faith receives, and pitches upon; so that the Lord may deny them many outward, many inward blessings, yet they have himself that is better than all, better, as he said, than “ten sons.” Children may be prodigals for a time, but when in want, they will then sue for their portion. Saints for a time may mispend all times,

times, talents, ordinances the Lord gives, but the Lord will bring them to want, and then they will sue for their portion, and the Lord will give, and they will receive that.

Reason 2. Because there is no satisfying of the Father without him; bring Benjamin with you, or never look to see my face. The conscience of a man can never be pacified until God is satisfied for all wrongs. Now the Lord Jesus has satisfied; nay, perfected forever them that are sanctified, "by once offering up of himself to God," Heb. x. 14. Now the soul never comes to have settled peace in his own conscience (though peace was purchased before), but by offering up of the Lord Jesus by faith, even Christ himself: the soul wants him, the Father shews a ram in the bush, gives Christ; and that the soul gives him for satisfaction, and offers him to God again. As the priests in the old law, when the sacrifice was slain, then it was offered. God offers the soul a crucified Son, faith takes him and offers him, "Lord, behold thy Son," Rom. iii. 25. And hence comes propitiation and peace, peace to see that God is satisfied. Now if by faith we come to have the peace of the Father's satisfaction with us, then it must needs pitch upon the person of the Son first. Hence many never have peace, because it is not a Son himself they look for, but somewhat from him: they are blind, and dead, and hard, and these things they would have helped, but close not with Christ himself.

Reason 3. Because the soul can neither actually receive, nor expect to receive any thing from Christ, unless it has first pitched upon the person of Christ. A man may hope he shall, and presume and think he shall, and it may be receive somewhat out of the common courtesy Christ shews to them that look towards him, but never shall receive any saving good thing till now, John vi. 53. "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of God, and drink his blood, ye have no life."

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Look as it is in our eating, as if a man should seek to get nourishment out of meat or drink, not by feeding on itself; so it is here: Some said this was a hard saying, and so it is to a carnal heart, Rom. viii. 32. And hence observe when the Lord promises any great thing to his people, Isa. vii. 14. he ever brings in the Lord Jesus, that if he shall be given, then all things also.

Reason 4. Because true faith ever closes with Christ by love to Christ, as false faith closes with him out of self-love, Cant. i. 2, 3. "The virgins love thee:" That is love, indeed, which is set upon the person. The Lord never puts his pearl, nor sets it in a swinish faith that contemns the Son: No, it is a precious faith that loves the Lord. Hence it carries the soul to the beloved.

S E C T. IV.

Use 1. **HENCE** see the reason why the Lord keeps his people hungry, and empty, and cuts them short of many spiritual blessings: It is that they might close with, and be contented with the person of the Son. There are three things some of God's people seek for, and find not, if the Lord intends good to them.

1. They desire the comforts, and conveniences, and peace of this world; O rest is sweet! and the Lord will give them none of these, or keep them at short commons with these: And why? That they might lay up their peace, and find all in himself, Gen. xv. 1, 2. Abraham, after the slaughter of the kings, was in fear that he might make the Lord his shield, Hof. ii. 6, 7. "She shall seek her lovers, but shall not overtake them."

2. They seek for some good to themselves, in themselves, from themselves; I would fain believe and cannot; I would fain do (says a man) but alas he grows

grows worse and worse; the commandment comes, you will do, there is your task, do it, yet they languish and die, and why so? Jer. iii. 22. that they might look for help and righteousness in another, "In the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel;" not from the mountains the strongest helps and means; in the Lord it is alone.

3. They seek for grace, and strength, and peace from the Lord Jesus very importunately, and many times very impatiently, and so sinfully too, and the Lord denies them; it has been better with them than now, therefore they wonder the Lord should be so full, and they so empty, and think sometimes to seek no more, and the Lord denies a dole at this door too, that they might content themselves, and lay up their joys in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace is sufficient;" It is strange that Christ so able, so ready to help, yet denies: I confess it is sometime some lust and stumbling-block the Lord Jesus sees, O but against that they seek, and truly here is the cause, that having no good from him, they might place all their happiness and felicity in him. Look as it was with Jacob, a great famine comes, and all the sacks are spent, and they they are used roughly, tho' not hardly nor wrongfully, and all was to bring them to the sight and embracings of Joseph: all the time of famine was for this. So the famine of spirit is to last long, and the Lord denies supply, to bring the soul to see, embrace, and rejoice in the Lord Jesus: The most flourishing trees in God's house shall have their winter season, and cast their coat, that they might preserve themselves in their root. This is the great wound of many a believing soul for a time, to rest more contented with what he receives from the Lord, than to quiet himself and his heart with what is in the Lord: Man would have his lost happiness in his own hand, and this the Lord will not suffer his people to lie in long, Gen. xxvi. 4. and the best and surest course

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course that can be taken, is to cut them short of all: for faith is an unconquerable grace, that whatever it loses out of its own hand, it will find it and enjoy it in another. And therefore see God's end; and meet the Lord in this end of his. See all in the Lord, and see in your blessedness therein all your wants, lay it up there, that if you will boast, here you may do it all the day long: for this is God's greatest plot, to pull all men down, that his Son may be set up, to wither all the grass and beauty of all the flowers of the field, that the glory of the Lord might be revealed. I must here give you a taste, for it does me good to think, and it will do you more good to enjoy the sweetness of this truth. There are four things you desire all, which are chiefly laid up in Christ, to that end that you might in all wants quiet your hearts with unspeakable peace there.

1. The free grace and love of the Father; this is that I hope which you prize most, pray for most, fear the loss of most, would rejoice in the having of most, without which thy life is death, and blessings cursings, and death the beginning of hell. Would you see this love better than life to thee? O I cannot see it, or but very little of it. It is true, look upon yourselves you can see but little, many fears, many tears, many heart-sorrows, many temptations, many desertions, many vexing sins, many denials to your prayers; but O look up to that ointment which is poured upon this blessed head, that love is shed abundantly upon the Son from before all worlds, and look what love, what grace the Father shews to him, that love is thine; that love in him is shewn to thee, 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. Here stand amazed all ye people of the Lord, you have heard the Lord loves you, and sometime believe it, but being under water, cannot conceive of it, nor see how he loves you, how dearly, how abundantly; O look now upon the love of God the Father in the Son, as he loves him, so he loves thee a worm,

a devil, notwithstanding all thy want, all thy sins, all thy miseries, John xvii. 23, 26.

2. Life : O death is terrible, and a dead heart is woful, it is the great plague that lies upon men without Christ, that are strangers to the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. Is thy heart ever so joyed as when it is most enlarged for God, and hath most delight and liberty in the ways of God : Alas ! thy life is but a lingering sickness, a poor life to that which thou hast in Christ. O look up there, Col. iii. 3. You think when your hearts are affected, and warmed, and quickened in prayer by word, or by divine thoughts, &c. O if it might be ever so, how happy ! O but it dies presently, and thou knowest not how. Look up to the Lord Jesus, he is alive when thou art dead, and his life is thine, and it is ever thine in him, even eternal life, 1 John v. 10, 11, 12. " This is the record, that he " hath given us eternal life ; " Alas ! I find none. O it is in his Son, in whom thou livest a better life than men, than kings, than angels. And I doubt not but the Lord suffers temptations to rob you of your life, that you might find it when it is lost here, and rejoice that when you have none, yet here it is : Blessed be God, he will keep our lives as the life of Jacob was knit up, and bound up in the life of the child ; nay that life is ours.

4. Conquest and victory over all enemies ; it may be you say often the Lord hath commanded me to seek for help, and he will help, he hath promised so to do, but I find my distempers still raging, Satan still bunning, and winnowing, and vexing, and foiling : and as I feel many, so I fear more sorrows before I die, and then death and delusion, that at last I may be deceived : Nay, the agonies of hell many times assault me, and then I am put to a loss, that is it possible I should escape ? Why beloved, the Lord Jesus conquered death, and sin, and hell, and the grave, and Satan, with all the strength of darkness
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and delusion, and hath spoiled them, Ccl. ii. 14, 15. And now he is in heaven in his kingdom triumphing over them, that they cannot hurt him. I, but what is that to me? Why this very victory is thine: hence we are said to be dead with him, Rom. vi. 8. and risen with him, Col. iii. 1. Nay, to sit in "heavenly places," as it were triumphing in him, in glory with him, Eph. ii. 6. Nay, Heb. x. 14. "He hath by one offering perfected his people for ever that are sanctified:" It is true, you may rejoice in that you shall conquer, but O remember this, it is done already in thy head, and in thy husband.

4. Immutability and certainty of standing in a happy estate; for this is that which fads the heart, I shall fall at last. How is it possible but I should be so? No, beloved, look upon the Lord Jesus, in him thou art, if he can fall, if he can die, if he can be cast from the Father's face, then thou mayest; believe "that I live, you shall live also," John xiv. 19. Adam indeed was chosen to be head of mankind, and as when he stood perfect, we stood, so (though mutably) he falling we fall: so we are chosen in Christ, and as he stands unchangeably, so we stand: and as he was tempted every way, yet did not, could not fall, no more canst thou: So that O that the Lord would give you hearts to learn this lesson, when there is nothing but want in thee: Do not shift so much for a little from the Lord, but see God's end and reach it. O rejoice, glory in, and bless the Lord. This was Paul's life, and the life of the churches first planted. O bless the Lord for all spiritual blessings in Christ; this will be joy in sorrow, life in death, this is golden faith, this will answer all fears; when Satan saith, thou hast not this or that, nor canst not do this nor that, and to hell therefore thou must go, reply again, it is true, I have little, I am dead, but Christ lives for ever; I may fall in myself, I never can fall in him; that which he hath is mine.

Object. It is true, they may do this, that know the Lord Jesus is theirs, but alas! I know not that.

Ans. If you do not, you must wait then until the Lord make himself known unto you; but tell me, will you do this, if you did thus know it? It may be some of you have not done so, unless by force sometimes, and you will find it one of the toughest works of faith that is: What is a poor man better for another's wealth? and a sick man for another's health, and a naked man when others are clothed? Yet beloved, by virtue of the power of faith, and our union to the Lord Jesus, a man is the better. A woman that is matched to a prince may have never a penny in her purse, and yet she rejoiceth in that her husband hath it. It is the secret nature of faith to make a man all one with Christ, in Christ, in that manner that I cannot find such an union in the world; and hence his health, his cloaths, his grace, his life may be matter of as much joy as if a man had all this in himself. And because many a soul hath Christ, but feeling such emptiness in himself, as that he cannot think so, and it may be would do so if he saw whether he might do so or not: I shall therefore express my thoughts to them thus in these particulars,

1. That all that fulness that is in the Lord Jesus, it is not for himself, but for them that want it, John xvii. 19. he might have been blessed in his Father's bosom without thee; why should he therefore live, and do, and suffer, and rise, and glorify his blessed nature, but for them that wanted this. He is filled with wisdom, life, strength, because men are blind, dead, weak.

2. But you will say, all the world want it, and yet few in the world shall ever have any share there, therefore all them in the world that hunger after all that good that is in him, they may now in the absence of it content themselves with it, that there it is in him for them; for the Lord fills the hungry, and so hun-

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gry as it is not something or other that they pick out, but all Christ, and all of that that is in Christ: now is the season to eat, if bread and hunger meet, now satisfy yourself. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Paul prayed, and the Lord denied, yet now the Lord bid him feed on his grace: so that when thy heart asks, what hast thou to do with him when so vile? Answer, Yet the Lord hath all, and I want him, and hunger after him. Take heed of despising his grace; if thou hast no hunger, the Lord be merciful to thee!

3. If you have so contented yourselves with him, as now you place all your felicity in him, to this end, to receive life from him, as a man satisfies himself with bread that he may have life: for as I would not damp the faith of the elect, no more would I patronize the sloth of the wicked. Many a man it may be may say, I have nothing in myself, and all is in Christ, and comfort himself there, and so fall asleep; hands off and touch not this ark, lest the Lord slay thee: a Christ of clouts would serve your turn as well. Run not to this temple to make it a den of your thievish heart; no, do you so content, or will you so content yourselves with him, as to account yourselves happy here, that all the world is dung in respect of this; and this you do to suck and receive more from Christ, and so to be like him: now hold here, and live here, and rejoice here for ever, Phil. iii. 9, 10, 11. Isa. xii. 2, 3. First, "The Lord is my song and salvation;" therefore we will draw hence: if the Lord gives nothing, yet I have it in him; if he gives any thing, the honour shall be given to him. O take this course: 1. Lest you lose Christ and all too. 2. Lest the Lord ever keep you short in a complaining condition. 3. That you may be every day and moment in heaven, and win the crown from every hypocrite who knows not what this life in Christ means. 4. That the Lord may be your glory, for he is not only the glory of God, but of his people Israel too.

too. 5. That you may love yourselves the less, and the Lord the more.

S E C T. V.

Use 2. **HENCE** see a necessity of seeing and knowing Christ, before a man can believe, or if ever the soul believe; for if faith closes with the person of the Lord Jesus, the same faith must first see that person: If it takes the Bridegroom himself, it must see and know him first. Did you ever see any espoused together that did not first see and know each other? the eye must first see, my meaning is, there must precede this act of the understanding to see Christ, before a man can close with Christ by his will: for I aim not at this, whether it goes before in time, but in order of nature it does precede, and absolutely necessary it is: Hence John vi. 40. "He that seeth and believeth in the Son hath eternal life:" This is so necessary to faith, that faith itself puts on this name, Isa. liii. 11. "By his knowledge." Luke xix. 41. "O that thou hadst known," Isa. xli. 21. "Look unto me and be saved." And hence unbelief in scripture is exprest by being blinded, Rom. xi. 7, 8. for though Christ be absent from us on earth, yet that is the excellency of faith, it makes things absent present, and sees unseen things, Heb. xi. 1. John viii. 56. "Abraham saw my day;" and that is the wonderment of saints; there is light in Goshen when all Egypt is dark, when others are blinded they see, Isa. lx. 1, 2.

Quest. *What is this knowledge or seeing of the Lord?*

Ans. I make this question, partly because this is the first chief evangelical work, as it appears to us; nay, indeed, it is in a manner all; hence Mat. xi. 27. "I thank thee thou hast hid these things," &c. If this be right, faith is right, &c. And if this be not, a man's faith is but a fancy, and a man's sanctification and

and reformation, hopes, desires, are but the works of death and darkness, if this sun be not risen : And partly also because all the policy and power of Satan is to blind the eye here ; for then he knows men will stumble at every step, 2 Cor. iv. 4. He will help to believe, and joy in believing, and reformation after that joy, that a man might content himself with this joy and faith, and look not after the sight of Christ. And if I was to leave the world, I should leave this to be thought of, as Christ told the woman of Samaria, "Ye worship whom ye know not," so men believe in whom they know not, and pray to one whom they know not, and depend on whom they see not, and hence do not wonder at an adulterous generation rising up, that deny all evidencing of a man's justification from his sanctification, and that it is but a fading thing, because they never felt what it meant, because they never knew what the Lord Jesus meant, and therefore listen to it. I say therefore first what this knowledge is not, for every man has some knowledge.

1. There is a knowledge of the Lord Jesus by report, the fame of a man may come where himself is not seen ; so of Christ, there may be a fame spread of him, and of some excellencies in him, where he is not savingly known, and this is not seeing of Christ ; for a man may live and die a damned creature with this knowledge. The Samaritans had some knowledge by report of the Messiah, John iv. 25. "When he is come he will tell us all things," so many among us hear that Christ is come, and risen, and glorified, and the Saviour of the world and of sinners, &c. But how come they to know this ? By way of tradition and report only. I confess this knowledge may be a means in the elect to bring them to saving knowledge, as in the Queen of Sheba that heard Solomon's fame, and the disciples, John i. "Come and see." But reprobates are not drawn by it, as Herod, Luke xxiii.

8. "heard many things of Christ," but never saw him till he came to judge him. So here, because they can live well without Christ, hence rest content with the bare report. Whereas they that had diseases, heard of his fame, and came to see Jesus.

2. There is a knowledge of Christ from his works, as we know what trade and what artificers many men be, because these are external things, yet know not the man: so there is a knowledge of Christ by his works, that by him the worlds were made, Heb. i. and all creatures governed, and a man may see him in his trading with others, and himself, all comes from him, that a man may say, the Lord has done all this, and that for me, and yet strangers to Christ. And if men be ignorant of him here, he may do such wonderful things before their eyes, that they cannot but wonder and say, this is the Lord's work, and yet know him not, Mat. xi. 20. He upbraided the cities where most of his mighty works were done, but they saw him not, John xv. 24. "If I have not done," &c. The Lord may work strange temporal deliverances, that you may know all power is in Christ's hand to save and pardon, Mat. viii. 27. so as to marvel and not envy; "What manner of man is this that winds and seas obey him?" It is true, the saints do know the Lord, but they are not idle spectators and receivers of him; but O that I might have that Christ himself, they do him no good, give him no content without him; as he said "What givest thou me if I go childless?" John ix. Christ had opened the blind man's eyes, and yet he cries, "Lord, who is he?" ver. 36, 37, 38. whereas others see the works of Christ, and vanish, or if affected, an evil spirit comes on them, as on Saul when he saw David's love.

3. There is a literal knowledge of the Lord Jesus by the bare letter only of the word, and it is wrought in this manner. A man doth not only take up the knowledge of Christ by report, nor from his works, but

but he hears, reads, is well catechised concerning Christ and all his offices, and benefits, that there is much light let in; hence his mind having those literal relations, guesleth at them, and conceives of them, and because the mind is carnal, it apprehends them in a carnal manner (though it thinks it sees Christ truly). Hence a man having a form of this knowledge in his head, he may be able to express much, and make a large confession of his faith, discourse of points of controversy in matters that concern Christ, and justification by Christ, &c. and instruct others, and yet having no more, know not all this while what the Lord Jesus is.

First, Because as he was a carnal Jew that had but the form of knowledge in the law, Rom. ii. 20. so he is but a carnal christian that has but a form of knowledge in the gospel. The Jews were exceedingly versed in scripture, and boasted they heard God, and saw God, Christ tells them, they never heard his voice, nor saw his face, John v. 37. *i. e.* they only saw it literally, not savingly.

Secondly, This is but a carnal knowledge, which letter and fancy beget, 1 Cor ii. 14. "He cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Thirdly, It is a dead knowledge, or will be dead and unsavoury; and hence many that know much of Christ, feed on their lusts and dunghill delights, because their knowledge feeds them not, fills them not, as fancies do not feed.

Fourthly, It is a false knowledge; for give a blind man a description of the sun, or a tasteless man of honey, he may set up a false image and deceive himself, and so doth this. Many set up a false image of Christ, and trust to that. Or as in description of another country, when he sees it, then he sees he was deceived: so saints see they were deceived, and saw not Christ, nor sin, nor God, and so shall men in hell see; hence Isa. vi. 9. "In seeing they see not:" How came that to pass? They did see, but saw not really.

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Fifthly, It is such a knowledge as hinders from saving-knowledge of Christ, John ix. 39. "I came that they that see might be made blind." The wise learned Corinthians must become foolishness, and the light that is in thee is darkness. This light stands in your light: and yet this is the knowledge that thousand thousands content themselves withal, and hence catch hold on Christ, and think they have him, when in truth it is but the image and fancy of him.

Quest. What then is this knowledge or seeing of Christ?

Ans. There is a seeing of Christ after a man believes, which is Christ in his love, &c. but I speak of that first light of him that precedes the second act of faith, and it is an intuitive or real sight of him as he is in his glory. Christ reveals his wonderful glory to the soul really, as *ex. gr.* A man hears sin to be the greatest evil, and sometimes conceives by argument how, but sees not the thing sin, though he sees the word sin: so a man that never travelled into foreign parts, may hear, and read, and speak of countries: or as herbalists read of the nature of plants and trees, yet never saw the things, nay, trample upon them when they see them: so it is one thing to read of the sun in a book, or to know it by relation, another thing to know it by sight. This is therefore the saving-knowledge of Christ, to see the Lord in his glory as he is: not perfectly, for that is in heaven; hence we shall there see him, and be like unto him, but imperfectly, and in part, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "Changed here into the same image." And this appears from these four grounds.

1. That knowledge the saints have of Christ, it is not by bare word only, but also by the Spirit. The word relates Christ, but the Spirit is the interpreter of the word: the interpreter of heaven must interpret the language of heaven. Now the Spirit ever shews us things as they are, even though they be deep things, and mysteries, it makes them plain, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. "As the sun when it ariseth it scatters all darkness, so
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“when this day star ariseth :” Not that these things^s are revealed without the word : for 2 Cor. ii. 14. and 2 Cor. iv 4. lest the light of the gospel should shine : It is by the word that the Spirit does enlighten.

2. Because the sight of the knowledge of Christ, it is as the knowledge of a thing in a glass, 1 Cor. xiii.

12. Now though you see not the man face to face, yet if you see him in a glass, there you see him as he is : *Quod videtur in speculo, non est imago*, as some think. A man may know another by relation, or by some picture, but in a glass that is more full. The Jews they saw Christ, but it was under veils and types, and pictures of him, this was obscure : under the gospel the veil is pulled off, and with open face we see as in a “glass the glory of the Lord.” In heaven the glass is taken away, and then we see as we are seen.

3. Because that estate the saints are translated into is a state of glory. Hence when justified, then glorified. Hence as that sanctification that is in the will, is the beginning of the life of glory, so that light God puts into their mind, is the beginning of the light of glory. Hence as in heaven the soul sees Christ by the full light of glory perfectly, face to face, so in this life the soul sees Christ really as he is, yet, as in a glass, imperfectly. Hence we are said to “see in part.”

4. In regard of that abundant goodness and love of Christ to his people. Love cannot lock up secrets. Joseph hid himself from his brethren for a time, but his bowels melt, he must tell them that he is Joseph. Christ may do so, but his love even constrains him afterward, to let them see whom he is, John xiv. 21. I confess its admirable love to reveal Christ in the word and letter of the gospel, to hear of him is happiness, and if the Lord saves you, you will think so too : But this is common to wicked men ; there is a manifestation of himself as he is unto his people. And now he is in glory, hence reveals himself in his inconceivable glory, that now a man eyes the Lord, and
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such things he never thought of before, which eye never saw, 1 Cor. ii. 9.

Quest. How doth the soul see him as he is?

Ans. I in this case, rather desire to learn than teach, even from the meanest; yet what is obvious I shall suggest, in this weighty business.

This seeing of him appears in three particulars.

1. True saving knowledge and sight of Christ consists in the sight of the glory of his person, especially now "caught up to heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God, in all the glory of the Father." Look as at the judgment day the Lord shall break out of heaven in such glory as shall amaze all the world, and all eyes shall see him, that he shall not only be admired in himself, but in all his saints, by all that are round about him: just so doth the soul see him now (though not by the eye of sense, yet by the eye of faith) though not come to judge the world, yet now ruling of the world; though not in the clouds yet in heaven; though his humanity only in heaven, yet his God-head beams, filling heaven and earth; though not yet coming in the Father's glory, yet sitting clothed with the Father's glory: for if a man looks on creatures, he sees God's footsteps of power; if on angels and saints, God's image of holiness; if in Christ, there God himself, 2 Cor. iv. 4, 5, 6, 7. It is true, then, Christ's glory shall be seen by the wicked, but that is by sense, not by faith, that is only in their minds, but there is no shining into the heart, to the kindling of an infinite esteem of him: and this the God of this world hides from people; Christ the Lord of another world, in spite of Satan, reveals to his people. Before a man sees Christ, there is nothing more base than Christ, even to the elect, and then the ways and work of Christ, Jer. ii. 11. "Have any heathen changed their gods? these change their glory for that which doth not profit:" Now the Lord will be, must be esteemed of his people; hence will and does reveal this glory of his to his saints, whereas here others are blind.

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2. In the beholding of the Lord as he comes and appears in the glory of his covenant; for when the Lord reveals himself so as to cause the soul to believe, and thereby to make it one of his people, he never makes any people, but by entering into covenant with them. Hence he ever appears in his covenant first, Isa. xlix. *ult.* Look as when the Lord made him a people at Mount Sinai, Moses came down from God, appears with tables in his hands, &c. So when Christ comes to make any his people, he comes as mediator of a better testament, Heb. vii. 22. "On Mount Si-
 "on," Heb. xii. 22, 24. Now look as it was with the Israelites, 2 Cor. iii. they had the covenant of Christ, and Christ revealed; but as Moses' face was covered, so theirs was, and Christ there was veiled over with the law, even the moral law, written in stone. Hence there was a veil on their hearts too, they could not see Christ, the end of the law, but only the veil, viz. the law, and hence looked for life by that, and hence were hardened against Christ, Rom. ix. 31, 32. So it is the misery and blindness of many people at this day, they see the Lord Jesus, but with his veil on: for people being not able to see and prize the glory of Christ immediately, the Lord appears with the law first, requiring this and that, and they endeavour to do it; and hence if they cannot, they comfort themselves with this, the Lord accepts my endeavours, not seeing the hypocrisy of them, or else they are never at peace, or very seldom; And why? Because they see not to the end of that which is abolished, never saw the end, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now therefore when the Lord reveals himself, the Lord makes himself known without the veil, so that when conscience cries, you must do whatever is commanded, or die; the Lord Jesus now comes and appears, and saith, Therefore see what need thou hast of me, who have fulfilled all righteousness, and done all. Receive me that have done it, and thou shalt live. O but may I now as I list? Am I now free from the law? No, it is to be

be thy rule and life in heaven, but "I will write my laws in thy heart, and cause thee to walk in my ways." Hence the soul sees all done for him; 1. In Christ. 2. All that he is to do for Christ; he sees it not in means, nor in himself, but in the Lord's promise, and here faith hangs, and has peace. For two things trouble;

First, I have broke the first covenant of the law, Christ appears not as one that exacts the debt, but as one that comes to enrich him when poor.

Secondly, I cannot walk after it as a rule, Christ appears in this covenant and promiseteth to cause him to do it; and hence after all departings from the Lord, he will not depart further by unbelief, but sees the end of the law, which is Christ, that in him he may perform the covenant, and by him be strengthened to walk with him as after a rule: For the covenant of grace is not, Christ will be righteousness to thee if thou wilt walk after the law as a rule, but Christ will do both: and this the soul sees in its glory, else it is no sight. Hence 2 Cor. iii. gospel is called "The ministration of glory," which no carnal heart can see; for the vail is taken away when it turns to the Lord, and sees him. The saints only with open face behold this: It is true, for a time they may make of Christ a Moses, as Peter, Luke v. 8. "Lord depart from me, I am a sinful man." And the Lord may deal roughly with them to humble them, as Joseph did to his brethren, but it will not ever hold; and the Lord appearing thus to them that have been stung by the law, and that killing letter, now the Lord appears in ineffable beauty and glory; to others there is nothing in it: they may see this, yet not believe.

3. In seeing the Lord in the glory of his grace, or fitness for him, and this is the main: for look as it is in marriage, there is a respect to beauty and feature, and that draws. Now a woman sometimes appears to one so, that though portion be great, &c. yet he cannot like, another can because God has a hand in it, and

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and what fits the fancy, that is beauty: there is a suitability every way. So Christ is presented with a rich portion to many, and yet they cannot like, cannot see a beauty, because they cannot see a fitness and suitability to them, and for them: another man can; because he sees fitness and suitability in the Lord Jesus for him, in respect of his misery and sin, and his gracious disposition, John i. 14. "But we saw his glory full of grace and truth," Ps. xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children of men, full of grace are thy lips:" which is so beautiful in the Lord's eyes, that the Father hence exalts the Son, for all the grace he shews to his elect. Now what makes Christ appear fit? *Ans.* The knowledge of a man's self, and sense of vileness; hence, Luke vii. 29, 30. "The Pharisees despised the counsel of God against themselves, when Publicans justified God," &c. And it is a rule, that the saving-knowledge of Christ is dependant upon the sensible knowledge of a man's self. Let a christian in Christ lie in his sins, and comfort himself in remission of them without repentance, he may talk of Christ, but no beauty will appear in Christ: So it is at first, the soul feels sin, and that God is holy, and will hate him: then the Lord shews Christ came to call such. Yea, but I have no good and cannot help myself: Christ appears fit to seek out such. O but I cannot see, nor believe, nor be affected; Christ appears one fit to do all, full of wisdom to perform the second covenant. O but I want all things; Christ appears all-sufficient. O but I shall fall; Christ appears constant in his love. O but he is far to seek; Christ appears present. O but I shall sin; Christ appears merciful to bear with, and heal infirmities. O but I shall believe too soon; he is fit to prepare and dispose. O but all the world will be against me; Christ therefore appears fit to rule all for me. O but death and grave may hurt me; Christ appears fit, who has conquered all: and this is ever in the saints. Now lest you should think you have this when you have not, and know it not, see the evidences hereof.

1. If ever the Lord has thus revealed himself to thee, he has brought this light out of darkness, and made thee sensible of it, 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6. O you that have been a little troubled, and then hear of Christ, and then depend on him, and wait for comfort from him, and now you are well : you never yet saw him. Nay, if truly enlightened, you will go mourning to your graves for your ignorance of him, Prov. xxx. 2. and seldom is your darkness seen and felt, but there is some beam let in.

2. It damps the glory of all the world, that a man lays down all at Christ's feet, as the wise men, Mat. ii. As glow-worm-stars go out when the light of the sun ariseth, so all the comforts, and all the miseries of the world are nothing now, Acts vii. I see Jesus.

3. It makes a man very vile in his own eyes, Isa. vi. 5. Nay his excellency vile as Isaiah his tongue, and wonders that the Lord should look upon him a worm who is so glorious. "What am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me," &c. He sees Christ sit, and then sees his glory, and then saith, "What, me Lord?" me to stand before thee? Lord depart, I am a sinful man!

4. It necessitates the heart to believe, not with assurance, but with a clinging to him : hypocrites have knowledge of Christ, but it never heats the heart; this, as fire necessarily heats, and that which is put to it is heated, so here : for the sight of the last end doth necessitate when it is seen, Isa. lv. 4, 5. "They shall run to thee, because God has glorified thee," Rom. i. 16, 17. it is the power of God, for there is righteousness revealed : that though the Lord bids depart, yet he cannot be gone, nay when he concludes, yet as Jonah ii. 4. so he can see to a temple through the belly of a whale. Many say, may I believe? or I cannot prize him! I tell you when the Lord appears as he is, you cannot resist that light, but you must cling to him.

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5. Where this is, a man rests not here, but sees more and more of him, John i. 49, 50. A man sees now his glory, but after he shall see his love, and after that he shall know his mind, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Eph. i. 9. "The mystery of his will." And then his constant presence, and all his walkings with him and towards him, so as to be familiar with him, that in time of old age, he shall be an acquaintance of Christ's, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "From glory to glory;" whereas an hypocrite's light goes out, or grows not. Hence many ancient standers take all their comfort from the first work, and droop when in old age. I know the saint's light is obscured, and the Lord hides his face, but then they are troubled, and it shall break out "with healing in his wings." Nay all their life time they may think they know him not, because they have not those measures. O therefore see a necessity of it.

1. You that are vile, and ignorant of Christ, no faith yet, no Christ yet: And what then? Thy sins are upon thee now, and wo to thee, for "the wrath to come." O poor creature! thou dost not see, nor canst not see; if thou didst, thou wouldst not crucify the Lord of glory.

2. You that be professors of the church. O deceive not yourselves, if the Lord has enlightened you, O bless him. If Christ were here, he would bless you, Mat. xiii. 16. Nay when he was here, he did it, he doth it in heaven. "I thank thee, Father," &c. Mat. xi. 25. Luke x. 21. But if not, all is un-found that ever you had. O therefore look you be not deceived here, and therefore wait upon the Lord to manifest himself. Who knows but the Lord may help? Nay when you are feeling of the infinite need of it, and of your own woful blindness, it is begun.

S E C T. VI.

Use 3. SEE the happiness of saints (all you standers by) and of all believers? You think what are they?

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What have they, that I have not? What get they by seeking, by mourning? They have the Lord himself, not kingdoms nor heaven, not guard of angels, not pardon, nor comfort or grace only, but which is greater, and than which there can be no greater, the Lord of glory himself. Is there any thing that is good there? It is theirs. I doubt not but angels stand amazed at this. What hast thou? Thou hast peace, and ease, and duties, and friends, but no Christ, then poor and curled thou art.

S E C T. VII.

Use 4. **HENCE** learn to judge of your faith, whether it be of the right make or no? whether it be such a faith as will never fail you, but shall in deepest miseries, in forest agonies, and most furious temptations; nay in greatest sins and desertions, be indeed a friend unto you? Is it such a faith as pitches on, and closeth with the person of Christ himself, and him alone? So that all the delights in creatures quiet thee not, unless thou canst find him through them: Nay, no ordinances cheer thee, unless thou canst see him in them: Nay, heaven itself will not content thee, but him in heaven, Psal. lxxiii. 25. And hence it is him thou seekest, him thou seest, it is him thou approvest thyself unto, and serveest: So that it is this Rock of Ages thou trustest to, Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. It is his strength thou art strong by, it is his life thou livest by, it is the Lord himself that thy faith fathoms. This is right, 1 Pet. ii. 7. For now what good can the Father deny thee, when he has given a Son to thee? What hurt can Satan do thee by all his shakings, when thou hast the Son himself, this corner-stone, this horn of salvation to support thee? What hurt can the law do thee, when thou hast righteousness in a Son? What hurt can delusion do thee, when thou hast wisdom ever plotting for thy good, in such a glorious head as
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the Son? What hurt can death do thee, or sin do thee, when thy life is in the Son? "O lead me to the Rock," saith David, "that is higher than I." O here is a Rock higher than death, than grave, than sin, than Satan: Who can hurt thee now? But, O beloved, how many fall short of "entering into this rest?" and closing with this person? And there are four sorts of them, that spin the finest thread of deceit to themselves, that think they believe when yet they have not the Son.

1. Those that do not close with himself, but only come to him for some righteousness out of himself, (for I shall not speak of them that forsake all, and follow Christ, for the bag and for the loaves), for it is with all men living naturally, as it is with men that have been rich shopkeepers, but now they are broke, and cast into great want; steal they will not; dig they cannot, beg they know not how; turn apprentice to another they must not, they have not been used to that life; hence they resolve to set up their trade again, though they sell but pins, and points, and small wares; and because they cannot set up for themselves, they go unto merchants to help them, and run into their books on trust, and desire day and patience, and they will pay them all again: now it is not the man that they respect, but to make up their markets out of him; but alas! they cannot pay their debts, and hence to prison they go: so it is here, God set up Adam with a stock in his own hand, now he is broken, and cast into great want, and fears the arrest of God's displeasure, now, sin men dare not, dig and help themselves they cannot, and to beg and live upon the Lord and his alms they know not how, indeed they will not, they are not used to this life; hence seek to set up their trade again, though in never so small duties; and because they cannot help themselves, hence they go to Christ, not as to an husband for himself, but as to a merchant to set

them up again : and truly Christ for many ends, and to shew his freeness to his own, gives many talents to such, which they receiving, hope to please the Lord by ; when I can get the Lord to give me some more knowledge, brokenness, affections, enlargements, abilities to do, then I hope I shall please him : but either they spend all and fall away to nothing before they die, or else death comes and carries them captive to the judgment-seat of God, and there they see they are run but the deeper in debt, and not able to pay. Thus it is with Papists, who profess that none of their own works save, but his works in us, and his blood meriting, that these shall save. Hence they trust not to what they do, but to what the Lord does, against which very faith the apostle disputes, Rom. iv. 5. Thus it was with the Jews, divers despised Christ, and sought a righteousness of their own ; others cried, Lord, Lord ; Lord there be these sins that wring my conscience, ease me of them, here be these duties I must do, else never saved, and my heart is dead, O affect me, and help me to do them : there be such works I am to perform, and have no strength to pray, to prophecy, Lord assist me, Mat. vii. 21, 22. " Depart, I know you not," never accepted of you ; you thought these things would please me, you closed not with me, O now depart from me, from my fellowship, my bosom, my presence : for this is ever their frame, they think to pacify God by what they do, and though they think his justice cannot, yet they hope there is such indulgence in his mercy that he will accept. Thus it was, Isa. lviii. 2. for this is their temper, they are not wounded with the want of Christ himself, but with some jarrings against the law, for which they fear they must die. Hence not seeing into the spiritual nature of the law, they are wounded, not slain by the law : they hope they shall live if they can leave such sins, perform such duties, feel such abilities. Now having made trial at home, they go to Christ, and

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and seek him with delight for to work this or that, and then they are well: now if they do not receive at present, then they hope by seeking to find in time, if he doth not help them, then they shall be well. Hence they ever live in some sin, and know it not, as these did, and as the young man, Mat. xix. And thus it is, as it is with two princes, one is in trouble by inroders, he sends for aid to another, but doth not cast down his crown, and put himself in subjection to the other. So men will be kings, and hence send for aid against the inrodes of some sin that stings conscience, but put not themselves under the Lord Jesus. Bring those mine enemies hither, Luke xix. 27. In one word, as the wound is, so is my closing with Christ: if one be in outward trouble, now to Christ he goes to deliver; if pressed with inward trouble for some sins, now to Christ to remove them, and so to pacify conscience; if with want of Christ himself, now he goes for himself.

2. Those that close with promises without Christ himself, and divide between them two, that strip Christ of these his swadling-clouts, make their gain of these, and let himself go. I confess all a christian's wealth is laid up in promises, not in words and syllables, for they are dead things, but Christ in them, and God's faithfulness in them, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, 5. This is all my salvation, for all fulness is in Christ, he is rich, but what am I the better? nay the more miserable, for all emptiness is in me; therefore in the promise lies my peace. And this is a christian's support in all troubles, and hence he casts anchor here; but here is his frame, he lays not hold on them without Christ, but by them goes to Christ, and there rests, John vi. 46. "He that has heard of the Father cometh unto me." Give children milk in the dish, they cry still, they must have it from the mother, and there suck: so 2 Pet. i. 2, 3. Now there are others, that finding some work in themselves without Christ,
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and thinking that it is saving, and so a good sign; hence are mistaken, and close with it without Christ, and now they think it is well. I doubt not but the Jews that be devout comforted themselves with that promise, "He that confesseth," &c. Prov. xxviii. 13. not understanding of it, Mat. iii. "Say not within yourselves we have Abraham to our father," that promise kept them off from Christ, Mat. xxii. Some came not to the feast, some came, but without a wedding garment. It is with these men as it is with men that come to buy wines, they taste them, and content themselves with a taste, another buys the thing: a saint doth so; another tastes the sweet, and after falls to the impardonable sin, Heb. vi. Or as it is with a man that sees corn on the ground, he buys the field, another he gleans somewhat, and contents himself with that. There is in one word a double error:

First, When a man shall close with Christ without promises; and hence seek to be seated without a promise. Hence say some, you must not gather any evidence from any qualification you feel in yourself.

Secondly, When men shall snatch and nibble at promises, and misapply them, not closing with Christ in them and by them; I have confessed my sin, and repented, and run away with this without Christ. O time will come the Lord will say, how camest thou in hither? what hast thou to do to take my promises into thy mouth? to arm thyself against Christ by promises to make a spoil of Christ's grants, and let him be crucified? When Saul rent off Samuel's garment, he said, "The Lord shall rend," &c. 1 Sam. xv. 27, 28. The letter kills, all promises without Christ slay, because they keep the famishing soul from bread itself.

3. Those that close not with promises only, but with Christ himself, but it is only with the image and
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fancy of him, which they think is himself. In true faith the Father reveals the Son as he is, or the Son reveals himself as he is, and faith hence closes with him as he is, John vi. 40. But some there be that hear of him, hence think what he is. Hence a carnal mind imagines of him as it imagines of a king in a far country, and falls down to his image, and trusts to it, and depends on it, and joys in it, until a man comes to be converted, or to die: and then he sees the deceit. Or if he did see him, yet he can see no beauty in him to desire him. There is many a man in this case that trusts to, and joys in Christ, whom if he did know he would loath. John came preaching the gospel to shew them Christ, they all came to him, and rejoiced in his light, but it was but for a season: for when he came to shew them "there he is," John i. 29. not one man stirs when he shews them Christ, and ver. xxxv. "only two:" and chap. iii. 32. No man received his testimony. This is (Beloved) the great sin and cause of all the rest, if they had known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Christ is not seen, hence not thought of, hence not esteemed; hence men boast not in him: Nay, it is the great plague under means, that in seeing they see not. "Lord how long?" You say Christ is never so clearly true; but thou in seeing mayst not see; and if it be seen, thus, then look for ruin, Isa. vi. 9, 10, 11, 12. We say christians want not light, but life and affections. O beg for light that will bring affections, else all affections will dry up, if not fed with this Spring, John v. 37. What people had such means as they, yet they had not eyes to see?

4. Those that do not close with the bare fancy of Christ, but with himself; but it is not for himself, and for his holiness, but only for his peace, and consolations and joys. Like a sick woman that comes to the physician, not to marry her, but to heal her, cure her, and so comfort her. Or if she doth come to marry

marry him, it is only to satisfy her lust, or to save her from trouble, &c. In a word, they receive Christ, that he may give contentment to them, and not that hereby they may also give contentment unto him. They close with Christ to make them happy, not to make them holy; but they thus closing with him, think they have him, and hence rejoice exceedingly, and hence have a love to him, and hence have some kind of communion with him, and hence think they are espoused to him, and more familiar with him than others, and hence verily look with these "five foolish virgins" to embrace the Bridegroom: That look as a saint from a false apprehension of Christ, to be none of his, may be very sad, lose his joy, nay his very love, in the act of it, nay his communion and boldness to go to him, nay his expectation of him; so from a false conceit that Christ is mine, *e contra*. Thus a man is grievously troubled with the sight of God's anger, and with horror, and useth all means, at last he sees only Christ can do it, and hence seeks for and prizeth his love (for his own ease) for as horror may be his greatest evil, so love to ease him, may be his greatest good: At last he is fully perswaded. How? By any work or word? No, but God has perswaded, and it is now sealed, hence joy. But now there is matter of more trouble, holiness and close walking with Christ, this is troublesome; he cares not for Christ, to help him here; but deviseth how to keep Christ and joy without holiness. Hence let a world of sin lie upon them, they be not troubled with that, they look up to Christ; or if they see and be troubled at it, they take it as a burden, not as the greatest burden. Hence (say men) you must not judge of your estate by any thing or qualification you feel in yourself, for these may fail your eye-sight in misty times (but we must follow it then, and not rest till we see and find it; for, "without holiness no man shall see God.") Hence also let there be never so many falls, yet say they, ne-

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ver call your state into question, hence they profess, we cannot move till we be moved, and if I do not, it is not my fault. Hence if ministers do preach any things which are not about the person of Christ, or the excellency of a christian in Christ, or the emptiness of the creature to prepare for Christ, (which are indeed of great use) and press to any work or service of Christ, they are legal preachers, and bring people under a covenant of works. Whereas if we preach duties, and leave them as signs, before being in Christ, they are so, but here to preach any duty of the law, is part of the sweet will of Christ. Tell us (say they) what we should do. What can a man do? "He can do all things through Christ:" True, but Christ must come to act it. Yea, but he has a faith to fetch it, 1 John i. 6. Many said they had communion with him, 1 John ii. 3, 4. It seems, they said "they had no sin," as now some say, God sees no sin in justified people, God looks to the new creature only, it is not I but sin: if the Spirit help not, it is not my fault. Not many days since it did lie upon the spirit of one, who seeing Christ has undertaken all, closed with him, rejoiced in him, not for this end, not from the beauty they saw in holiness, nor bitterness of sinfulness, but because they should be eased of the work. I have known them that have lived in some sin, and promised the Lord shall be blessed if he save them in their sin; and conceiting he would have loved him; thus these. In a word, the soul of man desires rest and peace, seeks for it in creatures, seeks to satisfy itself there, there it cannot; hence seeks for it (as many dying men do) in Christ, not in the grace, but in the joy of Christ; not in Christ's holy presence, but in his comforting presence; seeking the utmost perfection of a christian in the seal of the Spirit, not in the mighty actings of the Spirit for God. Hence he is deluded, and fancies he has Christ, and hence joy. Sin is the great evil, hence

the end of Christ's coming is to take it away. Hence if a man close with Christ, to remove horror, not sin, and so has not closed with him for his holiness, you never closed with Christ for the end of his coming, nor for his, but only for your own ends, and so it is not him, but his, 2 Cor. ii. 15. The gospel is "a favour to them that perish," if of death to death. O consider of these things if it be not thus, 1 John v. 11, 12. Hast thou the Son for thy portion? Dost thou see his glory full of grace to accept and sanctify thee, thou hast life: if not the Son, but only something from him, O death and not life! The bonds of death (not life) are upon thee, which no creature can unloose unless the Lord come to thy grave-side and unloose thee.

S E C T. VII.

Use 5. Of Exhort. **T**O close with the person of the Lord Jesus: you will think this is not a right course thus to do. We cannot do it. *Ans.* Yet the gospel has commands and entreaties wherewith Christ's Spirit goes to the elect; and if you could see Christ in the ministry of man, you should feel it; and hence we look it should be so: And besides, saints that have faith and power, are quickened by the voice of the Son of God. Consider therefore,

1. All men are fallen into a bottomless gulf of misery and sin, though once righteous. Hence God's truth having said, "He that sins shall die:" Hence justice comes out to do execution, and when the neck of all men thus lies on the block, yet mercy pities, and saith, O spare, save! Satisfy me, saith justice, then I will: Hence mercy sends forth a Son, when no men nor angels could help, and he takes flesh,

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takes all their sin, fulfils all righteouſneſs, bears their ſorrows, and by “one offering perfects for ever them “that are ſanctified;” and having done this, is now at the right hand of God in the glory of his Father, all creatures ſubject to him, all excellencies being met together in him: ſo that now he is the delight of God, the joy of heaven; ſo that whatſoever thou canſt want, or loſeſt, if thou haſt him thou ſhalt find it in him: and alſo whatever he can do for thee, in his time thou ſhalt receive it from him, Deut. xxxiii. 26, 29, “Who is like the God of Jeſurun.”

2. Now there is a univerſal offer to all people where the goſpel comes; enemies are entreated to be reconciled; for though he has not died for all, yet now being king, ſuch is his excellency, that he is worthy of all: Hence commands all to receive him: and if this be a condemning ſin to reject him, it is then a command lies upon you to receive him, and the foundation of this offer is your wants and miſeries. You are dead, O come to him therefore for life: weak, guilty, blind, O therefore come to him for pardon, peace and life. Not fulneſs, nothing but emptineſs is the ground of this offer, Jer. iii. 22.

3. Hence there is nothing on God's part, nor yet on your part that can keep you from him. No ſins, no wants, unleſs it be your will, Mat. xxiii. 37. Therefore now whoever will ſhall have him, let him take him, Rev. xxii. 17. There be two acts of the will, election and reſolution, I muſt have him, which if you will, nothing that ever thou diſt or canſt do can pleaſe the Father ſo much: ſo that he will, 1. Adopt thee to be his ſon, John i. 12. *As e contra.* 2. Thou ſhalt enrich thyſelf with a greater bleſſing than if heaven, and earth, and all glory was put into thy hand, as the Lord himſelf is better than all; and hence once thine, ever thine, none ſhall pull thee out of his hand,

2 Pet. i. 5. And it shall rejoyce the heart of Christ himself in heaven, when as his bride thou givest to him thy good will, Isa. lxii. 5. And if you do not kiss the Son he will be angry, Psalm ii. And God knows whether now the last word, the last offer is to be made to thee.

Object. 2. But I find such sins in me, that till they are gone I dare not.

Ans. Then you will first remove sin, and after receive Christ: first be your own saviours, and then make him another: you shall never do it. O close with him to take sin away, because sick, therefore receive him.

Object. 2. But I have no will, my heart is endeared to my sin.

Ans. Therefore resign up thyself to him to give thee a will, (put it into his hand as bad as it is, this is spouse-like) and to take away that will to sin, so thou shalt have him; "I am my beloved's, he is mine:" For the Father looks to the law, and faith, Sinner, if thou believe, thou shalt be saved; now lie under the Spirit, and you are where you should be; resist here, you resist the Holy Ghost. O but sin is dear. Consider, 1. What good did it ever do thee. 2. Has Christ shed his blood or no, if not, O the wrath of God is to come; if he has, O wilt thou offer this wrong to his blood, that a lust shall be dearer than it, thy bloody knives dearer than the life, and death, and mercy of a Son: O therefore if any soul has any lust dear, I beseech you by all the bitter sorrows of Christ, not to reject so great salvation.

Object. 3. But must I receive Christ with my own strength?

Ans. No, you cannot, nor ought not; but if the Lord puts strength in thee, put it forth. Many followed Christ for loaves, but none that ever came to him for himself that ever he put away, Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12, 13. "I shewed much love, but they would

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"none of me; O that they had hearkened." At this instant God may give thee a heart.

Object. 4. But I shall never get my sins removed that I feel, which I think cannot stand with grace.

Ans. God's promise and reason is cross to thy fears; if a son, all things also though many years hence, Rom. viii. 32. If not by receiving is it by rejecting that thou shalt attain thy end! It is true, thou hast fallen off by thy sin from Christ, because thy falls have made thee fall off by unbelief from him, and made thee say, either I do not believe, or the Lord intends no good to me: you have had no strength, because not satisfied with meat.

Object. 5. But I may presume.

Ans. Is it presumption to honour Christ, and to have him honoured in thee? No, Dost thou think if the Lord shall after all thy sins, and in the midst of all thy miseries, give thee Christ, shall he not be honoured by this? Yes, who can ever have such cause to love him as I? Shall not thy receiving of him by faith honour him? Yes, Rom. iv. 20. Canst thou dishonour him so much as by rejecting him? When he has laid down his life, shewed his love, offers himself; now to reject him, it is to offer greatest contempt to him and his love that can be: hence can you honour him so much as by this? Do never so much without him, he is unsatisfied: do this, he is well-pleased. Nay after all thy sins, yet he saith, "Return to me:" Nay, nothing else is such a means to honour him, by doing for him. If so, grant thou art vile, unworthy, poor, yet for the honour of the Lord Jesus do it, who is but little honoured in the world, and stand out no longer: thus receive him, and then know it you are sons, and rejoice in it, and do it now while the Spirit is upon thee, and remember now not to change, Jer. ii. 11. As women, O I would not change; see how happy is thy joys: But Lord, who has believed our report?

Quest.

Quest. *How may the soul come to close with the person of the Lord Jesus?*

Ans. 1. Before any man close, *i. e.* see and say he doth close with the Lord as his own, he must feel a want of the Lord and his presence, not only of his comforting, but of his holy presence; for some people there be that never felt a want of Christ at all, they are great and grievous sinners, but they trust to Christ, and though he kill them, yet they will trust to him: others are in misery, and they feel a want of redemption, and hence close with Christ for that, Psalm lxxvii. 35. Others are in horror, and know not what to do, and they feel a want of the comforts of Christ, and hence close with Christ for that, and if they find it, they depart from Christ by looseness of life, if not by despair of heart, as Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. "God answers me not by Urim," &c. Others feel a want of some righteousness from Christ, the having of which supports and sustains them without Christ, till with the prodigal, when all is spent, then they think of bread at home, and the want of which makes them to have less esteem of, and desire after Christ, but they are full of objections against the thoughts of closing with him, but hence they close with Christ for that. Others there are that feel a want of the Lord himself, and hence close with him for himself; so that let a man have all blessings in the world, the purity of ordinances, never so many elapses, and droppings of divine light, and life and comfort in these ordinances, that he wonders the Lord should be so good to him, yet he shall find (if right) his soul secretly unquiet and unsatisfied till he has the Lord himself. As the favour of meat makes a man that wants it, cry the more after it, long the more for it; so the favour and sweet of all creatures, all ordinances, all duties, do not stay but stir up the soul to seek Christ, when he is himself, Jer. l. 4. "They shall seek the Lord weeping." Hence first they felt a want of him. "The full soul loaths

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“loaths the honey-comb.” Let the Lord be never so sweet, let him do them never so much good, the more good he doth them, the less they regard him, Jer. ii. 6. “They said not, where is the Lord?” Therefore that soul that truly closeth with the Lord, must first feel a want of the Lord, and say these ordinances are not bread, these creatures are not bread, all these parts, gifts, duties are not bread, bran, not bread. All this favour, this sweetness it is not bread. Hence I perish for want of bread, I have creatures, ordinances, affections, comforts, duties, but O no Christ. Like the prodigal, Luke xv. 17. O therefore do not only see, but feel the want of the Lord Jesus, you that never had him yet; nay, you that have him, you cannot have more of him, but by feeling more the want of him. O it was a marvellous expression of Moses, when the Lord began to be weary of their company, Exod. xxxiii. xv. “If thou goest not with us, carry us not up hence,” *i. e.* Let us rather die than live without thee. Mary, when Christ was crucified, the carcase of the Lord was gone, she sat there weeping: O much more for the Lord himself. It is observed by some for the saddest spectacle, to see a desert town; O what is it to see a desert heart, where no Christ inhabits? Or a city, and no inhabitants. And hence it is Rome’s curse, to be made “an habitati-
 on of devils;” so here. What is hell, but this, to see not Abraham, but to see Christ afar off? and thyself shut out. It may be it is no sorrow now, but it will be. It is a sad thing to see a man “rise up early, go to bed late, eat the bread of carefulness,” and yet gain nothing, Phil. i. 21. This is very sad. Christ is our gain, all the creatures you have, means you use, duties you do, comforts you receive, they are not gain, nay, the more God does for thee, the more thou lovest, if no Christ, because now thou art full by this means. O therefore get a heart sensible of the want of the Lord. Think there is a Christ, whose glory is
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the amazement of heaven, but O I see him not. Happy forever are they that have him, but O I have him not. Your hungry bellies cannot want bread, if they do, they are never quiet till they have it. Is the Lord no better? Lord grant this contempt be not revenged with spiritual plagues! Some of you know not your want, others feel it not, you can live without him; worse than Saul, he went to Urim, and lamented in great distress, "He answers me not!" O you feel no distress, because of this, I have him not! Nay, worse than Dives, that begged, O a drop of "water to cool my tongue!" Why cry not you, O the Lord Christ to comfort my heart! Why is not all this fulness longed for? O therefore let nothing else comfort, and let nothing discourage, but make this use of all, O I want him!

2. To the right closing with his person, this is also required, to taste the bitterness of sin, as the greatest evil: Else a man will never close with Christ, for his holiness in him, and from him as the greatest good. For we told you that that is the right closing with Christ for himself, when it is for his holiness. For ask a whorish heart, what beauty he sees in the person of Christ, he will after he has looked over his kingdom, his righteousness, all his works, see a beauty in them, because they do serve his turn to comfort him only. Ask a virgin, he will see his happiness in all; but that which makes the Lord amiable, is his holiness, which is in him, to make him holy too; as in marriage, it is personal beauty draws the heart. And hence I have thought it reason, that he loves brethren for a little grace, will love Christ much more. Hence if a man feels not the want of Christ, the bitterness of sin, as his greatest evil, he will never see nor admire Christ's beauty, much less close with it. Hence John xvi. 9. "Convinceth the world of sin, because they believe not in me," *i. e.* of that chiefly. O these wrongs done against the Lord!" Why
not

not of wrath and hell? O sin is the evil, and then it appears exceeding evil, when not against God simply, but against a Son. "Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Acts ix. Why? Did he not give in lusts and self-confidence? Yes, but in all these he saw he persecuted Christ. And after saddest search, I have feared the want of this, is the great cause of all a man's closing amiss with Christ. I would but ask where was Judas's wound? Was it resting in a Pharisaical righteousness without Christ? Without Christ, no, for he forsook all and followed Christ. Was it want of profession of him, preaching for him? No. Was it for want of communion with him? No: one sin he lived in, he had his bag. And hence when many went from him, he stuck to him, John vi. Judas still cleaves to him: yet even then Christ calls him a devil, which if ever he had tasted the bitterness of, he would not have lived in, nor died desperately, some think unpardonably without Christ, and so sin more against him. Let any man living shew me how he can close with Christ, and yet love one sin: I will be his bond-man, that can say, I close with Christ as my husband, and yet I love my whore too. Let any man living close with Christ, and keep his sin, or hide his sin, or let it be hid, his closing with Christ shall harden him in his sin, and so he shall die without Christ in his sins, as it is writ, Exod. xxi. 24. As it was with Joab, who fled to the horns of the altar, so it is with many men, they sin, and confess and sin under all laws: why? They fly to Christ, and this imboldens them, hardens them; why? Because they never tasted the bitterness of sin. I know a man's sin may be crucified before it is mortified, as it may be buried after it is dead. O therefore I beseech you look to this, you fail not here. Many of you are troubled, O take heed of being comforted until you get the Lord to do this for you, or unless you depend upon the Lord for this in his time. Some apply comfort when they see no good: I dare

not to myself or others : O therefore imagine thou didst hear the Lord speaking, why dost thou persecute me ? why is a man so grieved at any thing that crosses himself ? because a man loves himself, because he thinks his good lies there most : O see thy good more in Christ than in thyself, Acts ix. 4. O me, me in whom all good is, O to persecute him ! Two men here, and one is in horror, and the other not ; O it is because God sets it on : so here.

3. Make the Lord Jesus present with you, and see him really before you, and see him willing to give himself unto you, even to thee in particular. Those that give themselves in marriage, separate themselves from all company, and get alone together, and give themselves one unto another : so sever thyself from all the world, and set the Lord really before thee, as David, Psalm xvi. 8. and so close one with another. For two things keep from Christ. Either

First, They care not for him, and the cause is, they make him not present, only have a notion and report of him.

Secondly, They dare not close with him, because they fear he is not willing to close with them, with others, not with me ; so that all the scriptures they read, all the promises they hear are very sweet, but they look on them as spoken to others. Hence, Acts ii. 39. "For the promise is made to you, and to them afar off ;" be thou never so far off, if thou receivest him, he will receive thee, Luke ii. 14. "Good will to men : " O see this good-will in the Lord to have thee receive him, though thou hast no money, nay, because dead and vile, nay, because not sensible, Rev. iii. 17, 18. O wonderful ! because senseless of misery, therefore close with him. 1. Is it not his command it should be so ? 2. Is it not a sin to reject him ? will he not be angry with thee to reject him ? 3. Are not his conditions easy, so as he has undertaken to do all that which thou sayest thou canst

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canst not? Why wilt not? 1. O if I were a child, a son in covenant, I would, but because otherwise, hence I dare not. *Ans.* John i. 12. Receive him, he will make thee a son. 2. O but my wants are many. *Ans.* Receive him, he will make thee rich, Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3. O but I find my heart endeared to creatures. *Ans.* 1 John v. 4. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." 4. O but I shall fall back. *Ans.* No, Jer. iii. 22. "Return, and he will heal thy backsliding." 5. O but I shall never be able to do any thing. *Ans.* Yes, close with him, and thou shalt. 6. O but I am very vile before the Lord after all I do. *Ans.* Yet, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. He shall make thee amiable, only receive him, set thy heart on him alone. Now do you think he bears a good will toward you? Can you deny it? Shall not this overcome thee, that the Lord of glory should fall in love with thee, and bear good will to thee a leper, and that canst do nothing for him; and yet for all this, O this will draw thee. Psalm xxxvi. 6, 7. "O how great is thy loving kindness;" this makes a heart of steel to yield, Jer. xxxi. 1, 2, 3. O this will cut you in hell, O hard hearts that despised such grace!

4. If the serious thoughts of this do not draw thee, at least not so fully; look up to the Lord to reveal himself unto thee to be thine. For as no man can take Christ until God gives him, so no man can say he is his, until the Lord shews him that he is his. And as the creature cannot resist, but take when the Lord gives: so it cannot but see the Lord when he reveals himself as indeed he is. And look to see him to be yours by some promise; for there is a seeing Christ mine is great *fulgor* without the light of a promise, and spirit in it. Is Christ yours? Yes, I see it. How? by any word or promise? No, this is a delusion. The other is by promise, and that opened in the gospel, Eph. i. 13, 14. He saith not in whom

whom after ye were sealed you believed, but *e contra*. And how believed? by hearing the gospel. Hence saints return to this, Psalm li. 8. "Let me hear the voice," 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. And this is that which has knit the hearts of saints to Christ forever, "O thou hast the words of life:" For there is a voice of love to the saints engraven in all mercies, in all afflictions, in all God's leadings of them, though it be in a wilderness; but beloved, only the Word can tell me the meaning of these words of love. So there is love of Christ revealed according to a promise, not by it, and love spoken in mercies, but the Word interprets them and clears them to be no delusions; I mean the Spirit there: This is judged to be a good answer to Papists, who shall be judge of controversies? We answer, that which shall be judge at the last day, must be judge now: but so, Rom. ii. 16. John xiii. 48. So whether does God's Spirit seal, or the devil delude? It is a great controversy if you have not a word to see God's love by, but think you have a way to see it without, this Word shall judge you. O look therefore for the Lord by a word to do it, and say, "Speak Lord;" and if by word, look not for it without a work on your own heart. Some christian's have rested with a work without Christ, which is abominable; but after a man is in Christ not to judge by the work, is first not to judge from a word. For though there is a word which may give a man dependance on Christ, without feeling any work, nay, when he feels none, as absolute promises, yet no word giving assurance, but that which is made to some work; "He that believeth, or is poor in spirit," &c. till that work is seen, has no assurance from that promise. Tell him God has promised to pour "clean water," Ezek. xxxvi. Yes, for some, not for me. Secondly, It is not to judge by the Spirit, for the apostle makes the earnest of the Spirit to be the seal; now earnest is part of the money bargained for, the beginning of heaven

heaven, of the light and life of it: He that sees not the Lord is his by that, sees no God his at all: O therefore do not look for a Spirit without a word to reveal, nor a word to reveal without seeing and feeling of some work first; I thank the Lord I do but pity those that think otherwise: if a sheep of Christ, O wander not. *Object.* But I have waited long for this. *Ans.* True, therefore more need to wait still, it may be now it is not far off. *Object.* O but it may be he will not, if I knew that I could be quiet. *Ans.* Down proud heart, O take heed of that pride: art not worthy never to hear a voice from God? Be silent then, and humble, and now hear what the Lord will say, he speaks in a still voice, Psalm lxxxv. 8. do as they in that Psalm did; thou hast done thus and thus, O hear us, turn us, and then lie still and listen: O do thus, else you make God a liar if the word comes, 1 John v. 10, 11. and when thou hast him, O change him not.

First, What dost want, and where wilt go to find is but there? any creatures, and all the excellencies of them are there, and in time of trouble he will be instead of all, and also blest all.

Secondly, Dost want grace to honour a God? it is in him the fulness of it. Dost want God and his love? thou hast him, and now all his love, his care, his wisdom is thine. O wonder at thy lot and portion, and say, Lord I have enough. Thus much of the first doctrine.

CHAP. X. SECT. I.

Shewing that True Believers do with hope expect the second coming of Christ.

NOW they go forth by *Hope* and *Desire* of him and his coming.

Observ. 2.

Observ. 2. That the church and people of God, after they are truly espoused to Christ, and made in any measure ready for Christ, they now are no more of this world, but look out of it, and verily expect the second coming, and glorious appearing of Christ.

It is true, they look for his coming and company at the last period of their life, but this they look upon but as their welcome in the way, until the last trumpet shall blow, and that they shall meet the Lord in the clouds coming in the air, 1 Thes. iv. 18. which is the last and chief time of coming they look out for. The five wise virgins did here verily look for him; the five foolish seemingly did so too: That look as it was before the first coming of Christ, all their thoughts and searchings of heart were after the day, and time, and glory of it, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. And the nearer his coming was, the more ardently was he expected: Hence such flocking to John's ministry. Hence Simeon waited long for the "consolation of Israel." So the espoused and beloved of the Lord look out for his coming now. He has left them as orphans in this world, he has divers of his elect yet to bring home, and enemies to put under his feet, and then they know he will come, and this day they look for; as Christ expects it, Heb. x. 13. By the same Spirit they look for it.

This is that which Christ so oft presses on his disciples, foreseeing the slumbers of the world to be ever watching for his second coming, and hence these alone are accounted blessed, Luke xii. 37, 38. That let Christ come at any watch, O blessed. The duration of the world from the first to the second coming, is but as it were a night divided into several watches; the saints are the watchmen of the world, who you know look for day-light, though it be long, it is but a night; it will be morning: All the rest are like birds at their chaff. And hence he tells them the reason of the

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the uncertainty of his coming, makes this the end of it. They are evangelical commands with which there goes a power. Look through all the primitive church in the golden age, they had all this stamp, 1 Cor. i. 7. "Waiting." 1 Thes. i. 10. "To wait for Christ from heaven." Nay, Heb. ix. 28. He professeth those only may know the fruit of his first coming, that "now look for him."

S E C T. II.

Reason. 1. **BECAUSE** they really foresee, and see such a day, 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. "In the last days shall come scoffers, saying, where is the promise of his coming? all things are as they were," and hence live in their lusts, die in their own dung, and never look for it. But these foresee it really, and hence look for it. Men that live on land, and love the smoke of their own chimneys, never look out to other coasts and countries, or to a strange land; but seamen that are bound for a voyage, and have a pilot with them that has seen the coast, that is it they look for; so men that live in this world, and are well here, look not after Christ nor his coming, but they that have a pilot, a Spirit to shew them, this day, this coast, and are bound for another world, they look out for this; they see it two ways;

1. By the eye of faith in the promise, 2 Pet. iii. 13. And this makes the soul see it, when all things seem to be against it, and hence expects it; for that is the difference between faith and hope: Faith closes with Christ, and all the glory of Christ, in the promises as present, hope hence steps forth and lays hold upon the performance itself as absent. Faith entertains the promise as a faithful messenger, and sees that this message is true. Hope runs out of doors and leaves it with faith, and looks for the Lord himself, Heb. xi. 1.

2. By

2. By the light of glory in the thing itself; for saints do not only see things in letters and syllables, and words, but see things as they are in themselves. The wicked see the word, sin, and Christ, and heaven (and in seeing see not) but not the things themselves. Now the glorious coming of Christ being a thing to come, yet to be done, how do they see it but by report? Yes, they have the Spirit of glory, which Spirit "shews them things to come," John xvi. 13. "Which eye hath not seen." That look as their head Christ sees this day as it shall be, and his apprehensions are not false, but as he conceives of this day, so shall it be: so the saints by the same Spirit see it before it comes and are not mistaken about it, though it be very darkly, yet sometimes when the Spirit of God is not overclouded, they see it more evidently. For this is the great plague of the wicked, they see nothing as it is, and in hell they see how they have been deceived. So this is the happiness of saints, that though they see things darkly, yet they see things truly, the Spirit creating glorious impressions on the mind of things as they are. They know things that the eye sees not, as they are. That look as Abraham, John viii. 56. "saw Christ's day, and was glad," though afar off; so the saints by the same Spirit. Now why did Noah make his ark, and look for a flood? Because he saw it really. Did not others? No, it is said, "They knew not," Mat. xxiv. 38, 39. Never knew "till the flood came." The Lord made it not known. Noah did, the other did not. Hence the saints cannot but look for it.

Reason 2. Because they see nothing else in this world worth looking after, no, not for the present. For if a man sees the day of the Lord, yet has some prey in his eye, in this world, and his game before him, he will follow his hunting to catch his venison, though he comes too late for the blessing. But the Lord makes his people to see nothing in the world worth the hawking or catching.

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1. They see the glory of another day, another world, and this puts out the glory of this, and hence makes them look for that; and hence when Christ would comfort his disciples, he promises nothing here, but tells them, "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place, and I will come to you again," John xiv. 1, 2, 3. And hence they seeing this to be enough, look for this.

2. They see an end of all these things, of all the glory of them, and that these summer swallows will take their wings, and fly away in greatest extremities. Hence they look to eternal things, the Lord, and his coming, 2 Cor. iv. 18. "We look not at temporal things."

3. They find the Lord crossing them of what they look for in this world, sometimes of outward comforts, and sometimes of the performance of spiritual promises. And when God thus "hedgeth their way with thorns," then they "think of their first husband." Look as it was with Abraham, Heb. xi. 13. You know strangers when their way is uncomfortable, ever and anon look for their home: Abraham was heir of the world, yet he sojourns as a stranger in it, in tents, "because he looks for a city," ver. 10. So here, saints are the heirs of all creatures, yet the Lord makes them strangers here, and hence they look for something else. The things God has promised to his people are very great, but not accomplished. Why? Because full accomplishment is left till the last day, that hope may wait, and that we may live by faith. God has promised to "take away all tears;" O welcome that day! This world cannot do it, and the Lord here will not, 1 Cor. xv. 19. "If our hope were only here, we were most miserable."

Reason 3. Because they see and are sensible of their deliverance from wrath to come: There has been much wrath in the world seen, but yet the great wrath is to come; what that is, they see; what their

escape from it is, they see. Hence they look for Christ, when he shall appear like the rising sun, and like a bridegroom from his chamber to comfort them, 1 Thess. i. 10. For the devils look for this day, and natural men, but seeing wrath, wish themselves under rocks and mountains, and seek to smother it: but saints seeing themselves delivered, hence calmly look for it. The sense of this love makes them say, O when will he come, that I may "see him with these eyes!" They fear not (for why should they) the terror of this day.

Reason 4. Because the Lord has given unto them the first-fruits of glory, and of that day of glory, hence they look and wait for it. You know the first-fruits were part of the whole vintage, hence they gave thanks for all, because they then looked for all, Exod. xxiii. Rom. viii. 23. "We having the first-fruits of the Spirit, wait for the adoption." Look as it is with the wicked, that have rejected Christ, and counted his blood a common thing, and done despite to God's Spirit, there remains nothing "but a fearful looking for of vengeance," so here *e contra*. Rom. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. "Being justified by faith," now, 1. "Peace with God." 2. Access by Christ to God. 3. Standing in that grace. 4. Shedding of love, hence not only hope, but "glory in hope of the glory of God." There is none espoused to Christ, but taste this love, feel the warmth of his fellowship; feel the abundance of his love, but it is but in a little measure, in the first-fruits, hence they look for and expect the rest at his coming. They are sometimes full of fears, what if shut out at last? But when they feel the first-fruits of glory at that day, now they verily look for his coming. Christ died, we know, but it was not possible for him to be held long, and hence rose again, and then looked for glory, and then was taken up to glory: So here; the saints lie dead in the grave of sins and fears, but it is not possible

possible for them ever to be held here ; hence when “risen with Christ,” they look upon “things above,” and are waiting for glory, and at last are taken to glory with himself. Look as Jacob, Gen. xlix. 18. said, “My soul waiteth for thy salvation;” when the stakes and pins of this fleshly tabernacle are loosing. so the Lord is loosing him from the excellency of this world ; though he minds other things, yet he recalls himself, “My soul waiteth for thy salvation, O Lord.”

S E C T. III.

Use 1. **HENCE** let all flesh take notice that there is such a time, and day, and coming of the Lord Jesus. This was the apostle’s argument to prove a resurrection, “Christ is risen;” and to prove this, and so a resurrection from the dead at Christ’s coming, “else your faith is vain,” *i. e.* expectation of him vain, 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17. Men think it easy to believe a resurrection, and a second coming of Christ for that end ; but an hoverly slight work is quickly done, and an hoverly faith is quickly wrought. But when a man comes to look considerably, Is there such a day indeed ? Is there now in the third heavens that will fire this whole world, and gather his saints to his glory ? Now it is very hard. It is usual with Satan to pierce with extremities, that when they do begin indeed to close with Christ, and receive comfort from him, to smite them with thoughts : Is there a Christ, and is there such a time of coming ? Now of all the arguments to convince and persuade, methinks there is none like this, viz. That there be a generation of men in the world, that verily look for this day and see it, and have the first-fruits and beginnings of it already in their souls. A number of people that once never minded it, heard of it, but looked not for it, now to see it ; flesh and blood could not, Satan would not reveal it, hence God that cannot lie, has

shewn it unto them, so as they are in a manner eye-witnesses of it, men will believe eye-witnesses of any thing, especially if many. Such are the espoused of the Lord in all ages. "The things which we have heard and seen we speak."

Object. But may they not be deceived, and conceit that which is not?

Ans. True; but divine revelation of any truth, that cannot deceive; for that is no fancy of the head, nor delusion of Satan. Now this is a secret the Spirit makes known.

1. In that it fills the mind and feeds the heart with it, that it carries unto God with wonderment of blessing him that ever he saw this. Fancies cannot feed, especially in greatest agonies: Now they chuse misery on this ground, rather than present peace here, Heb. xi. 35. "Not accepting deliverance."

2. In that it works effects cross to nature, nay, to all a man's lusts in them. Noah foresaw a flood nigh, but he might be deceived. No, it is said, "he feared," kept close to God, and it came; so here.

3. This light whereby they see, is not only sweet and glorious, and cross to heart and lusts, but it is sudden, as with Paul, when going to persecute, "suddenly there fell a great light," and so he saw Christ. So when a man goes on in his sin, and suddenly the Lord reveals this and that by a word (else it is a deceit) which all angels could not do before, so as to see it, and that none can reveal it as he sees it, especially to bring this light out of darkness, this must be miraculous power, and no dream. But what do I speak of seeing? they feel the beginnings of it in the first-fruits of it.

For two great things shall be at that day.

First, Then all the elect shall have their fill of love.

Secondly, Triumph in Christ when in the clouds with him. Have they not the first here? Rom. v. 5. The feeling of which love cannot be a fancy, for it cannot conceive of it nor hold it. This is an infinite love,

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love, and that in the midst of the fence of sin and death. That many times they are even fain to say, Lord hold. 2. Triumph, Rom. v. 3. and that in afflictions, which make them by experience so to feel God in part, that they triumph for time to come. It is true, at times they look down the tower, and so tremble, but while they look up here, then they triumph, having access to the grace wherein they stand; so then look for it, there shall be such a day, and such a coming of Christ, Rev. i. 7. The Father has exalted the Son to ineffable glory. But, Lord! who sees him as these, in his glory, or to come forth out of his glory? It is but table-talk. But "behold he comes, and every eye shall see him." The Lord pities you, and holds out bowels of love, and faith; O receive me, O cast away those bloody knives that have pierced me; and sends his Spirit like his hand to draw you. But O do you not kick his bowels, do you not pierce his hands and feet daily? And when you have done, no tears! But he comes, and you that pierce him shall see him, &c. Consider of it, therefore, you that doubt of this, you that think not of this, and hence live and lie in your lusts, and despise him. Behold he comes!

S E C T. IV.

Use 2. **HENCE** behold the happiness of all them that be espoused to the Lord Jesus, in that their hopes are laid up in another world, at the day of the coming of the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. xv. 19. "If we had hope only in this life, we were of all men most miserable." Because none so foolish, or so sensible of misery as they, but our hopes stretch to another life, to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Suppose a man had all the crowns of the world cast at his feet, but at last to be dragged before the judgment-seat of Christ, and there to stand quaking, what should he be the better? What though faints have
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all the miseries in this world, but at last "with these eyes they shall see the Lord," and stand triumphing before him, and have a real sight and certain expectation of this. What people in the world so great as these?

Quest. What do they wait and expect for?

Ans. Great things, which may astonish the whole creation.

1. They look for him "to change their vile bodies," that this their husband, at the marriage-day, should take away these rags, "and make them like unto his glorious body," brighter than the sun; so that burn them, cut them to pieces, they see Christ loves both, and hence holds sword and soul in one hand, and scabbard in another, &c.

2. They expect he should take away all their sins, and make them like unto himself, engrave on their souls perfectly his own image, that their enemies they feel now, they look they "shall never see them more," 1 John iii. 2. And as no evil like it, no mercy like this; and no evil to saints like this, that yet they should grieve the heart of such a husband.

3. They look he should take away all sorrows and tears from them, for this the Lord promiseth, and begins to execute now, but it shall be perfected then; Isa. xxv. 8, 9. And hence called "the times of refreshing," Acts iii. 19, 20. It is true, the spouse and church is now sorrowful to the very heart many times, but there is a time coming that they shall never sorrow more.

4. They look he should take away all shame from them. For no people in the world is laden with more calumnies and reproaches by the wicked and by hypocrites, and hard speeches from the godly, and they doubt whether they be sons or no. Now then the whole world shall see they are sons, and shall stand, amazed at them, and shall not doubt of it, nor themselves; for the Lord shall proclaim it, and they shall hear,

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1 John iii. 1, 2.

5. They then look for recompence to all their "labour of love" to him and his. Hence 1 Cor. xv. 58. "Knowing your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Hence the apostle oft defers men for that recompence till now. "The Lord shew mercy to the house of Onesephorus in that day," 2 Tim. i. 18. So that some hereticks have thought souls sleep till then. They may pray and no answer, seek to do good, and do none. O but the Lord will recompence them abundantly.

6. They look then to "be ever with the Lord," 1 Thes. iv. 17. Never to be parted from him, never to live without him, nay, never to go away from under his wing, out of his bleeding bosom of love and endless and unspeakable compassions any more: And being with him to see his glory, and never see the depth of it, and to have the Lord to serve them, Luke xii. 37, 38. and giving whatever they call for, and all this when thousand thousands shall at this time be crying for a drop of water, and cannot get it. Now all this they look for, and more too: Which is, 1. Certain. For "hope maketh not ashamed." 2. Which fills their hearts with glory, and unspeakable glory too: for it makes it so clear and certain, that they have it all already; for though absent, hope makes it as present, Rom. viii. 24. He doth not say we shall be, but "we are saved by hope." Faith takes hold on the beginning, hope on the end. O the heavy wrath of God upon a world of poor blind, ignorant men that have no hope, no hope of Christ, no hope of glory, unless a flattering, dead hope. What a sad thing is it to think of a number of men that are buried in the world, and never to awaken until they see Christ in the clouds of heaven coming to be revenged on them. O methinks I see them falling down before the judgment-seat, and crying out, O that we had

had known of this day! O alas that I had hope! but not such an hope, but am now deceived. O it is otherwise with saints, they shall find what they hoped for, and infinitely more. What hurt can any do them? Let all the world come against them, their husband will come, and will kick them under his feet. Let them load them with reproaches, fill their hearts with sorrows, and their eyes with tears, their Lord's coming will comfort them. Let Satan tempt, and a Father hide his face, behold the Lord cometh, that shall deliver and redeem them! O see their blessedness, and let it draw you to make up the match with Christ, that never did it yet! He has been wooing of you, longing for you, and you wooing of him again, Lord take me! What hinders you then from striking the match, and concluding it? To give thyself this day to him, and take him only, rejoice in him only, when nothing thou dost can be so pleasing to him. And now you may look and believe what one day you shall to your comfort feel. And account yourselves most wretched creatures until the Lord be pleased to espouse you to himself.

S E C T. V.

Use 3. Of Examp. OR hence learn what to judge of those that never look for the coming and company of the Lord Jesus: It is with them as it was with the Israelites, when Moses was gone into the mount, and stayed there long, the people made their calf, and went to their feasting and rejoicing: So the Lord Jesus being gone for the Spirit of life, and to prepare a place of glory, it being now long since, they make idols of their jewels, and of their own excellencies, and of whatsoever is glorious in their eyes in this world. Or as Christ compares the secure world, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be;" or as in the days of Lot, when they never knew nor looked

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looked for it, though told of it, so it is with them. Do you think these are espoused to Christ, or made ready for Christ, whose glorious appearing is never, or seldom, or the least thing in their thoughts, and are far from seeing and setting it before their eyes.

Now, because if you ask men, Do you look for such a time to see the world consumed, and the Lord revealed, and your glory with him? Every one will say Yes, because indeed they have a dead hope. I shall therefore give discoveries of it.

Sign 1. Those whose hearts prize (though their heads do not) and whose eyes are dazzled with the withering glory of this world. When men lie under (not for a fit, for Christ's disciples wondered at the beauty of the temple) a great mistake of all things here, and put that good in them which is not, and that worth upon them which they ought not. For he on whose eyes the Son of glory has risen, and looks for the glory which shall be revealed; looks upon a dunghill world as strangers do upon their inn, and as travellers do on their tents, make a shift to rub it out for a time, but O home. O "that glory "that shall be revealed," Heb. xi. 13. They were strangers, because "they looked for a city:" Nay, they look upon these things, as God and Christ judge of them (for they have Christ's mind) 1 Cor. ii. 15. which stand for cyphers in the Lord's book: Nay, they look upon the very miseries of this world for Christ, greater treasures than the happiness of it, and hence chuse it and account their scars their crown, their shame their glory, their losses their gain, their sorrows their joys, as Heb. xi. 25, 26. Moses chose to suffer, and esteemed Christ's reproach his glory. And why? "He had an eye to the recompence of "reward," and saw the God invisible. And 2 Cor. iv. 17. "It works an exceeding weight of glory." Look as it is with a man that is born to great hopes of a crown and kingdom, and therefore brought up

not in the country, but in the court ; let a poor man offer him his thatched house, and promise him if he will come and live with him, and serve him in his patched clothes, what will he say ? No, begone to your friends, I am a greater man than you can make me, so here ; a man that is born and begotten to a lively hope of a crown now, by the resurrection of Christ, and brought up under the wings and care of Christ, to the hopes of a better world, offer never so much, promise never so fair, I am greater than all the world can make me, I must not have, if I love Christ, and I cannot have, if he loves me, both ; and hence looks to honour then, and peace and glory then, Col. iii. 1, 2, 3. It is clear, then, thou lookest upon the things of the world as great things ; O to have such honour, such an estate, so many cows and goats, so much ground paled in, so many ploughs, lands and oxen fit to labour, so much gain to come in every year, and such parts, and gifts, and duties to get me a name, to live before the best men, and to be good signs (to comfort me) of the favour of God : This is a goodly thing, the very hopes heat and warm the heart.

1. If you do not feel pangs in parting with a friend, a bosom-blessing so dear, you are not dead yet to it, nor risen to a lively hope of better things.

2. He that does not prize the evils of the world, more than the good in it, his eyes are dazzled with it : If the life of the world be not death to thee, the comfort of the world sorrow to thee, O they draw thy heart from God ; hence called "lying vanities." Look as it is with a king or master that gives talents to use, they cast them by, and fish for themselves, they look not for the coming of their masters : So the Lord gives you his ordinances, and word to use for him, and you scramble for yourselves, to enrich, and honour, and comfort yourselves, you look not for the Lord. Factors that go far for wealth, they will

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not bring home stone and rubbish, which they know will not go in their own country, hence other things that are of more price he spends his time for; so here. What do you do, you that eat the bread of carefulness, sell your commodities dear, and set your buyers on tainter-hooks? I look to be rich. You that can speak well, and have parts, and profess fairly; but go into your closets, God is neglected in your hearts, your constant union to Christ, dependance on Christ, approving yourselves to Christ, is not maintained. I would fain be honoured. You are come far from your own country: Why did you depart thence? To be free from trouble. And now here, what stay you for? O for ease. Will these coins go, and be taken at the last day? No, you look not for that.

Sign 2. They that say they look for Christ, but do not rejoice abundantly in hope of this time. Sometimes the hopes of God's people begin to die, and then comfortless, but when their hopes are up, and stirring, and not wounded by some sin or sleeping, there is a double joy that now they have.

1. This alone comforts them and fills them, John xiv. 1, 2, 3. So that they wonder at God, though they have never so little here, to have these blessings now, and everlasting glory, endless compassions and mercy at that day, John xvi. 22.

2. This joy is glorious joy, highest comfort, Rom. v. 3. "We glory in hope of the glory of God." Disgraced, but then honoured; hated of men, but then loved of Christ; poor, but then enriched; miserable, but then blessed; empty, but then filled; fatherless, friendless, but then glorified. O I tell you, miseries thus considered, are sweet! Can it be otherwise? Now you say you hope and look for this day. Where is your comfort of it? Where is your glory in it? Acts i. 11, 12, compared with Luke xxiv. 52. So thou wilt be in the temple, nay, in the fields, re-

joicing and blessing the Lord, that ever he should intend to set thee at his right-hand, at that great day of his coming. No man but has something to joy his heart. It is "corn, and wine, and oil," and not "the light of God's countenance" at this day? It is a sign they never look for. Do the world rejoice in their hopes, and not faints?

Sign 3. They that content themselves with any measure of holiness and grace; they look not for Christ's coming and company. For faints that do look for him, though they have not that holiness and grace they would have, yet they rest not satisfied with any measure, 1 John iii. 3. "He that hath this hope purifieth himself as he is pure." Christ finds us not lovely, but makes us lovely, by putting on his own garments, imprinting his own image. Hence faints content not themselves with any dressings, till made glorious, and so fit for fellowship with that spouse. And when the soul sees this love to be a son, and then to be proclaimed heir, O this makes them set Christ himself as the pattern to walk by. Now therefore,

1. When men shall think this way is bad, and another way of some faints is good, and take a copy of his course from them, and now is well, this only is to be pure as man is pure.

2. When a man leaves not till he gets such a measure of faith and grace, and now when he has got this, contents himself with this as a good sign he shall be saved, he looks not for Christ. Or,

3. When men are heavily loaden with sin, then close with Christ, and then are comforted, sealed, and have joy that fills them, and now the work is done, and they are past grace, and past repentance, and daily cleansing, now they study not what to do for Christ, that neither family nor church where they live, are the better for them.

4. When men shall not content themselves with a-

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ny measure, but wish they had more, if grace would grow, while they tell clocks, and sit idle, and so God must do all, but do not purge themselves, and make work of it, (indeed saints purge not themselves of themselves, for dirty hands will never wash a foul face) but by a daily dependance on, and importunity of faith, sigh after the Lord to do it; verily if not thus, you look not for Christ, 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12, 14. For if you did, you would say and think, if to be like him be my glory, O then that I might have it now. Sons that are born to their hopes in the court, will go in the court-fashion: beggars that are born and brought up under hedges, content themselves with their rags; so here: Lord where is this Spirit? especially even among us. There is scarce any but either would be honest, and then hopes God accepts of his will, or will be so, and then it is so much as will credit or comfort him. Lord, where is the man that mourns for this? How far short he falls of Christ, of Christ's prayers, Christ's speeches, Christ's meekness, but only patches up his comforts with some ends of gold and silver, and shreds of honesty: He hath heard others teach and preach, and gets some shreds of knowledge, thence he sees what others are, and do, and gets somewhat to be like them, have we not cried out, men are too good to be better in our own land? And unless a few under affliction or temptation, who is? I pray God such a race come not over hither, where God looks you should get a higher pitch; put off your wilderness-shoes, get those sins removed that provoked God there; or else besides the misery of a heart-brand upon thee, thou dost not look for Christ, and therefore art either not espoused, or asleep; and shalt, if not by the word, by the terror of God be dreadfully awakened. O *New-England, New-England* that art now making a conquest of the world, and seekest for the spoil of it to enrich thyself, to recover thy losses, and therefore makest a truce with thy disorders

tempers for a time, and dost not purge thyself as Christ is pure, I dare not yet tell thee what Christ Jesus has to say unto thee! Therefore think of this, that do not, he shall come in a time when thou lookest not for him: And hast not so much grace as the five foolish virgins had? This is the frame of men and professors; what are they? They were troubled, humiliation is past, they have looked for salvation by Christ, that is past; they have been comforted, that is past; what holiness? They will pray in families, keep company with saints, get into Christ, receive sacraments, that is past. What lack they yet? Many wants, but God accepts their desires for what they want, and that is their circle of honesty now, and there rest. Is it not thus? Is this to purge like Christ? If any have more, O wonder at the Lord for it. But if not, O thy doom!

SECT. VI.

Use. 4. **O** You espoused and beloved of the Lord, look for his coming, look for his company; the world looks not for him, because they care not; "Will you also depart?" Has he called thee as a virgin forsaken, and not comforted, as a wife of youth, and given himself to thee, and given thee a heart to give content to him, and thyself to him in lieu of his love, life and all, if it might do him any good? O are you born to so great hopes, and are they not worth the looking after? God forbid. Do this therefore especially in these five cases.

1. In case of strangeness felt between thy soul and Christ: It may be thou thinkest, O he that has saved, preserved me, called me, when I never looked after him, redeemed me when a captive, every moment pardons me, a daily friend unto me, that has given me ordinances, given me the comfort of them: But O yet to be a stranger to him, this cuts: O look now for

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for this time, 1 Thes. iv. 17, 18. When thou shalt see that bleeding heart, that has loved thee above all princes and angels, that body in the glory of the Father, and be as familiar with him as thou art known. O look for this, for it shall be so.

2. In case God's promises are not made good to thee. For at that instant a man believes he gives Christ and all things, all grace, all consolation, all glory, but it is in the promise, because he would have them live by faith a while here, as by sense in heaven; and being wrapt up in the promise, they feel it not, only plead with God: Hast not said, Lord, thou wilt subdue iniquities, purge me as gold is tried? Why then do I go childless, graceless? No more grace, no more Spirit, no better heart for thee? O now the heart calls in question God's promise or sinks? O now remember this day, for the perfect restitution of all things, perfect accomplishment of all promises is reserved for this time, Isa. xxv. 9. Thou prayest for many things, but they come not; Christ reserves the payment till this day. What a comfort is this? What a sweet speech was it of Joshua, Josh. xxiii. 14. "One thing hath not failed," when he had conquered the land. So then when the conquest is made, to see all the promises made good to thee.

3. In case of God's absence or withdrawing, or when thou seekest but little of his presence here in his providences or in his ordinances, private, public, and that in New-England too. Thou hast found one half-hour's time with the Lord, alone, sweeter and better than a thousand worlds. O but this holds not! Thou mayest, it may be, wait on the Lord in his ordinances, and go away with a sad heart, O I cannot see him, and canst not find out the cause why so heavy, and vile, and so loathest thyself. O now think of this day, 1 Cor. xv. 28. Then God shall be "all in all," then thou shalt have thy fill of love, and fill of God.

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4. In case of sorrow for the uproar of the world against God and Christ, and the wrongs done to Christ and his people; to see Christ crucified, and crying, spare my life; and saying, "If you seek me, let these little ones depart;" yet they are abused, and every one against Christ, as this day the world is coming to the last fit of madness against the Lord of glory. O now remember, and look for this day, 1 Cor. xv. 25. "He must reign." Lord what a comfort will it be to see Christ king then? Men come to see him king here, but O what will it be when he shall come himself, to see all secrets open, and the Lord glorified in himself and people, of all creatures? Look for this, to see the great and last plot of God brought to perfection. O think that is our day, that is our victory!

5. When you come to die, and think of leaving thy carcase to rot in the dust a long time, O think and look upon this day! "They that hear shall live." Why do I die? John v. 28, 29. "They shall then come out of their graves," &c. Thus look for this.

Motive 1. All creatures look for this in a manner, Rom. viii. 22, 23. Nay, Christ and saints in heaven look for this day, Heb. x. 13. "From thence expecting till his enemies," &c. Nay, devils look for it, but tremble: Only a secure world locked asleep to their eternal wo, look not for it.

2. This will help you to ride all storms, bear all knocks chearfully. Our hope is our helmet, our hope is our anchor, Heb. vi. 19. Eph. vi. 17. You will meet with them here, it may be, before you die.

3. The Lord has called you out of this world, he might have left you in it, and given you your hope, your portion here, and then wo to thee; but he has called thee to this hope, that if princes of the world knew, they would lay down, nay, cast their crowns at thy

thy feet for it, and say, O that I were in that man's case! Eph. i. 18. "Hope of his calling."

4. Hope and expectation of all other things shall fail, if God loves thee, he will make you know what it is to forsake your portion. If not, they shall fail you when you die, this shall not; it "makes not ashamed."

5. Methinks this is the glory of a christian, that he turns his back upon the world, and lives and waits for the coming of the Lord.

6. O this will give Christ's heart full content, when he shall come, Luke xii. 37. "He will make thee sit down to eat, and serve thee." The Lord Jesus himself shall only then pour out to thee and give thee whatever thou callest for, honour thee as it were, above himself. When thou art at rest in heaven, he will be at work for thee.

7. If not, he may "come in an hour thou lookest not for him." Christ may say to thee, from henceforth sleep on.

Quest. What means are there to make me look for him?

Ans. 1. Get some promise that thou mayest believe the Lord is thine, else thou wilt never look for him; or if you do, you will be deceived; for "hope is of things not seen." Nay, commonly when the Lord brings any man to his hopes, having given him a promise, and faith to believe it, the Lord in the mid-way seems to cross his promise. When the Lord promises life, glory, peace, honour, joy, fulness, heaven, they shall then; and never so much before, feel darkness, shame, trouble, sorrow, hell. For the Lord tries them by this, and "tribulation breeds experience, and experience hope." Hence you must first get a promise of Christ and glory, before you can hope for it, or expect glory, and then you may, Heb. vi. 18. For the promise will support hope, when heart, and strength, and all shall fail: Nay, it will expect contraries out of contraries, Gen. xxii. 5.

"I will come again to you;" compared with Heb. xi. 18, 19. So that soul that has a promise may say, when he considers God's power, and what glory he gives to God by believing it, God has said he will comfort me, he will cleanse me, he will give me glory! I will have all these out of my sorrow, my sin, my hell.

Take heed, therefore, of two extremes.

First, Of hoping without a promise, for that is but faith scared out of its wits, when it comes to be examined; I hope so, and I have had joy and persuasion of it.

Secondly, Of not expecting when God gives a promise. Can you live one day without it? It may be you have no feeling yet: But Isa. xxv. 8, 9, 10. Dost thou wait for the Lord, *i. e.* from a sense of emptiness, for all fulness thou shalt find in part here, and fully then, and say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him?" When a man's anchor is strong, and in good ground, he will look for safety, when in the harbour: O thou afflicted and tossed with tempests, the Lord has brought thee at last to Christ, after many drivings to and fro, and it clasps about him according to a promise; if God changeth, then thy comfort may not be. If revelations come, I know they may deceive, but a promise cannot.

2. Fear the terror of the Lord at this day, fear parting from him: I speak not of doubting, but the holy fear of saints, for that is the nature of fear, it makes a man eye the thing feared; as Jacob, when Esau was meeting of him. Noah fears and looks to safety in and by an ark, Heb. xi. 7. Lot's children took not his counsel, they feared not, but "he seemed as one that mocked to them." Paul, 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. "knew the terror of the Lord," hence looked for him, sought to approve himself unto him. Men that fear not parting with Christ, will never look nor care for him. And let it be a strong fear, else

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it will never carry you above your cares and surfeitings of the world.

Quest. How shall I fear thus?

Ans. Unless the Lord put it into your heart, none can; for the security of the world is not sleepy, but deadly: Men are bound up as strong as with chains of death; that till they feel the misery, they cannot fear it strongly. O look up to the Lord to unchain those chains of death.

2. Know the happiness of them that shall ever be with Christ, what is the sweetness of Christ's love, and worth of it. Imagine the last day come, and all the dead raised, Christ with flaming fire, all the wicked on the left hand, and then sent away with "depart ye cursed;" all the saints on the right hand, and then O come! and when all is dispatched, then to go up to heaven, and when gone, there to be forever rejoicing, triumphing in the presence of God, Almighty; and now what it will be to be far off from Christ, weeping, never to be pitied more. O he that was so full of pity, no heart then to pity, no hand to help! I can but only paint this fire. O that the Lord would help you here, that so you might look out for him. Sailors sleep in calms, and so it may be have many here in this place of rest. Others of you take heed, I will tell you your bar, It may be most estates are brought low and sunk; when you see that, now you either look back, or look for Lot's accommodations, and such an estate as is lost, it may be you will spy some hope of it, and then follow the game, and never look out till you die. The Lord keep you from it! You then will not look up for Christ's coming at the last day, or in his ordinances here: If thou dost so, had it not been better thou hadst been buried in the sea, or left in sorrow on the shore? O take heed therefore, look for the coming and company of Christ, and let this be enough, and because you cannot look for him in the clouds now, O look and wait for him

in his ordinances ; and consider if espoused ones, look for his coming then, and for perfect knowledge of him, and communion with him, then think, Lord what a heart have I that look not for him here! But, Lord, “ who will believe our report ?

Thus they went out by hope and expectation of his coming : Now the second thing follows, they went forth with longing desires after his coming.

CHAP. XI. SECT. I.

That Believers do long and desire for the Appearance and Second Coming of Christ.

Doct. 3. **T**HAT all those that are espoused to Christ, and beloved of Christ, they ought not only to look, but to long for the coming of, and their everlasting communion with the Lord Christ Jesus. For the consummation of their marriage with him, that though he be gone, our hearts may be with him, before our souls be, or before our souls and bodies be ; that though we may die, and lie down in the dust, our desires may live and lie in heaven, and cry, “ come Lord.” Now do not think this point true, and so far good if we could reach it, but this is a high pitch : for you must long for it. God forbid a christian espoused to Christ, should plead that work too much, which hypocrites, “ the five foolish virgins ” in their kind attained to. See presidents for this in all ages ; Abraham, and those in his time, who was “ father of the faithful,” Heb. xi. 15, 16. “ A better country,” where they might have fellowship with the Lord, and “ hence God is not ashamed,” &c. As if the Lord were ashamed of all them to be his people, that profess themselves so, but desire not this. In Christ’s time, Simeon, Luke ii. 29. with xxv. where “ he waited for the
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"consolation of Israel," &c. to enjoy more of him. In the apostle's time, it is also that which they all felt, 2 Cor. v. 2. "In this we groan earnestly," &c. But, you will say, it may be this was because of miseries, and want of ordinances, &c. Therefore see in the last age of the church, when the new Jerusalem was built, and when peace, and when Christ's face was seen in his house, yet then the "Spirit and the bride" "say come," Rev. xxii. 17. They are the last breathings of John and the Spirit in him. "Lord Jesus come quickly." But Cant. viii. 14. the church there entreats her beloved to "fly away to the mountains of spices," that she might enjoy him out of this world.

S E C T. II.

Reason 1. **BECAUSE** they are bound to love Christ and his appearing: to love his looks when he shall appear to the world, 2 Tim. iv. 8. The crown of glory comes as it were by succession, not only to me, but to "all them that love his appearing." Now, can there be any love of him and his appearing, and not so much as any desire after him and after it? Certainly there is no love, or if there be any, it lies languishing: For answerable to our love to any thing, is our desire, what we love only we desire only; what we love not at all or but little, we desire not at all or but little; so here. Now therefore to question, May a christian desire it? is to question whether a christian ought to love the Lord Jesus or no. We are bound not to love earth, hence bound to love Christ and his fellowship in heaven. "Let him be Anathema" that doth not so.

Reason 2. Because the Lord Jesus longs for them, John xvii. 24. throughout which chapter he prays as if in heaven already. "Hence I am no more in this world, and where I am, let them be also." He was
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on earth, but looks on himself as in heaven. That as it was with the high priest, he carries the names of the twelve tribes on his heart, "beset with precious stones," very dear to him, "into the holy of holies," so Christ. Not that he sees any beauty in them of their own, why he should desire them, but because he freely loves them, and dearly loves them, as being given him of the Father, and as having cost him dear; and hence if he loves them, he longs for them: Now, if he longs for them, ought not they much more to long for him? Psal. xxvii. 8. "Thou saidst, seek my face, thy face, Lord, will I seek."

1. He longs for thee now in glory, when one would think his thoughts and heart should be swallowed up with it, and shall not we long for him here in the valley of myrtle-trees, in misery, on the dung-hill?

2. He longs for thee when thou hast nothing to make him desire thee, he has all that thy heart can desire, being the very bosom-delight of God himself, Rev. xxii. *penult.* He did but say he would come, and John desires, O come. But doth he long for thee? Now not to long for him. If this love be not worth longing for, truly it is worth nothing.

Reason 3. Because this is our last and ultimate end that we are made for, chosen for, bought for, called for, sealed for, that at last we might be with the Lord, and be made perfect in one, 2 Cor. v. 5. "He that has made us for this is God," &c. For the whole Trinity enjoying infinite sweet fellowship with himself, hence desire it might be communicated, in Christ it is so, and now the last end is attained. Now if this be our last end, ought we not to desire it? Then we ought not to desire to be blessed, nor to desire the Lord may be glorified. Nay, you know that whatever we make our last end, it will swallow up all our desires after any other thing. This is the center and rest, and journey's end of our tired weary spirits.

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And the truth is, when we make it our last end, we cannot but desire it.

S E C T. III.

Object. BUT ought not a man to desire to live here in this world as David and Hezekiah did. May not one sin in this desire?

Ans. 1. It is true, "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," not only in regard that they are as precious to him when they come to die, as while they live, as gold when it is melting is as precious to the goldsmith, as when whole, and it may be more too, because it is then made better; but also because he will not lightly cast away their lives. He that bottles their tears, and will not let them be lost, will not easily let go their lives, and if God will not, they ought not upon every slight occasion to desire their death, and loss of their lives to be with the Lord.

Now there are two cases God's own people may desire to remove hence, where though there be some fire I confess, yet there is more smoke than fire, more sin than grace.

1. In case they meet with much unkindness from, and many sorrows in the world, and behold the sins of it. Thus it was with Elias, 1 Kings xix. 4. Who, when Jezebel threatened his life, fled, and would needs set sail presently and be gone; so it is with God's people, when they see enemies without, the universal rot of profession, that they think they are almost left alone; when God hath begun to do good by them, as by Elijah, but they think their best days are past, there is all they shall do, and God himself it may be meeting them with some crosses in this world; now presently they grow weary of their lives, and desire to die, which is nothing else but a pang of discontent, truly God will not suffer it, nor you ought not to desire it to die away

away in such a snuff: No, the Lord has work for them to do, and a journey to go. This desire is naught, and it is but a weed, and to be pulled up, that grows out of such a root as a discontented heart for crosses. I confess God uses sorrows as means to smoke us out of our hive, and we may use them for that end, but not only or chiefly them, nor from a pang or moody fit of discontent.

2. In case they desire death, and not life, before they be ripe for death. Husbandmen desire their corn in, but it is folly to desire it before it be ripe, and then they may. I confess it is the commendation of some trees, if not only good, but if ripe betimes, and it is the honour of a christian, to be ripe for death betimes, yet still before he is ripe he is not to desire it.

Quest. Now when is this?

Ans. 1. While the Lord hides his face and denies full assurance of his love, in this case as a christian cannot, so he ought not (if it were the Lord's will) desire to be gone as yet, and this is one reason why David and Hezekiah desired life, not death as yet, God had broken their bones, and his arrows were yet in their hearts; now a man is to desire he may stay a little while longer, that he may "sing the song of the Lamb," and tell the world "what the Lord hath done for him," and that he may not set in a cloud and die in horror. Mariners long to be on shore, but before they come there, they would not venture in a mist, but see land first, so should we desire to see the Lord in the land of the living. Nay, though the Lord gives his people a promise, which stays their hearts and is a twig to keep them from sinking, nay when he gives them some joy, yet still God has promised to reveal more of himself and his Christ in the promise, seeing him but darkly now: Now, they ought not to desire but wait, as in Simeon's case, "now let thy servant depart in peace," having long
"waited"

“waited for the consolation of Israel.” Children that will be up before it is day must be whipt, a rod is most fit for them, stay till it is day.

2. While their work remains unfinished, and the Lord has got little or no glory from them, though they may have clear evidence of the Lord's love: Christ himself desired it not till now, John xvii. 5. If thou couldst scale heaven before thy work was done, the Lord would send thee down from thence again, as he did the soul of Lazarus, and truly to do the work of Christ one moment here, is better than to have a thousand years felicity in heaven, nakedly considered in itself, in as much as the honour of Christ is a thousand times better than our own good. It may be there is much work within doors, many odd distempers to be cashiered, spiritual decays, &c. It may be there is work without, Christ has many enemies in the world, many prayers are yet to be spent against them, much good to do for his church, many tears to be shed for them, for praying trade is past in heaven. It may be some friends yet to be converted, thou hast been a scandal to them, it may be as yet few have been, or can say they be the warmer or better for thee; that work is yet to be done: It may be God has some secrets to reveal by thee before thou diest, stay therefore a while, while your work is done; it is true, thou hast but one talent, but little thou hast or canst do; yet God looks you should improve it whilst he is gone. A man that will needs to bed at noon-day, before night comes, what deserves he but a cudgel? So he that will die before his night comes, and while it is light to see and work by. When therefore you apprehend your work even done, then as not only Christ, but Paul, not only Paul, but God's watchful servants have secret warnings of death. And as mariners when they can see no land, yet by their soundings can tell they are near land or sands, then you may desire it, for then you are ripe, but it is sin to do it otherwise.

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And verily happy is that man that accounts not his life dear, but only the finishing of his course with joy. To conclude all, we are to desire our fellowship with Christ, as a man desires his last end, which desire doth not exclude but include desire after all the means first, before the end. Now many things are to be done by God upon us, and by us for the Lord again, before we appear before Christ, which we may desire firstly for this our last end.

S E C T. IV.

Use I. **HENCE** we see the vileness of the great, yet hidden secret sin of the whole world, which may be in part also in God's dearest saints, viz. in their hungry lustings and dropsey desires after the sweet of the things of this world. You shall have a man that amends his life, reforms his course, forsakes his own righteousness, no man's tongue can tell him, his own conscience cannot bear witness against him that he lives in any unlawful course; and I believe it is so, and may be and will be so. Shall I tell you therefore what hurts them? They are inordinate lustings after lawful things in themselves, and these they serve, Tit. iii. 3. Partly they grieve them if they do not satisfy and serve them, partly because they pay them with pleasures and delights if they do. Hence "serving lusts and pleasures" too, these like tops of mountains are seen, now when floods of wickedness begin to abate, these will continue while the life lasts.

I intend not to shew you at large, but according to my text the vileness of them.

1. They eat out all desire after the Lord Jesus and his fellowship, that he cannot long for the Lord Jesus. For a man can lay out no more than he has, now when his desires are lavished and let out to other things, how can he lay out any on Christ? And thus the Lord of glory comes to bear most horrible contempt, that he is not worth desiring in such a man's

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books. Thus it was with them, Luke xiv. 18. "E-
 "very one refused." Why? Because of their oxen,
 and wives, and farms, lawful things, but they lusted
 too much after these. When a harlot seeks to satisfy
 her lusts, she cares not how far her husband be off,
 never desires his coming home; so here: Many a one
 complains he cannot desire the Lord Jesus, which I
 confess is in mercy to some. But where is the cause
 of it? O they are running in another channel, and
 spent on other things: What a heavy curse is this?
 Some never think of death once in a moon, much
 less long for Christ, desire not his fellowship here,
 much less there. And why? Because of their lusts
 that eat out all.

2. Suppose they do not thus, but your heart is di-
 vided, so that you long for these things now, and pre-
 serve your longing for him against you come to die;
 yet these will make you lose his sweet fellowship. For
 a man's affections are precious things, and it is a pity
 any else should have them, they are all little enough
 for Christ, and Christ is worth desiring and longing
 for, and he stands upon it, and will make them know
 that have him, that all is too little for him, and they
 shall give him all before he give himself to their com-
 fort. Hence deny him these, and never think to have
 himself, and his fellowship, Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26. "It
 "is good for me to draw nigh;" How? By desiring,
 not earth nor heaven, but him. Hence he saith,
 "Thou destroyest all them that go a-whoring from
 "thee," ver. 27.

3. Suppose thou shouldst have him at last, yet he
 will never desire thee, never take any delight in thee,
 until that you come to get your affections unloosed
 here, Psal. xlv. 10, 11. Dost thou not find a strangeness
 between Christ and thy soul? Doth he not hide his
 face? Doth he not soon depart from thee, though he
 appears sometimes to thee? Doth he not let thee lie
 like a broom behind the door, and doth little by thee
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either within or without? And is not this a sad and heavy thing? Why sayest thou, doth the Lord deal thus with me? O thy heart is yet after thy father's house, if thou didst forget it, then he would "take pleasure in thy beauty." What pleasure can earth give thee, when then the Lord takes no pleasure in thee?

Object. But may not a man desire these things? If we may, how far?

Ans. 1. A man may lawfully desire them, provided his desires are not swallowed up in them, but run through them to Christ himself. For it is not lust properly to desire a creature, or any pleasure in it; but to desire it for itself, and for pleasure's sake: For now a man makes a god of it. Thus it was with the Israelites, *Exod. xvii.* "Give us water that we may drink;" so give me sleep that I may rest, give me cloaths that I may be warm, give me an estate that I may be rich, &c. Now when a heart desires them, but his desires end not there, but run through them to Christ, that he flings down all comforts, and saith What is this to fellowship with Christ: Thus far a man may desire and rejoice in them, and it is a sin to do otherwise. *Nehem. ix. 35.* A man may be content to have a spring run through his ground to the sea, to be swallowed up there, but to swell, and rise and overflow his ground and house, that is not safe, he may be drowned so: So men come to be drowned in their lusts, that let them swell within doors.

II. A man may desire them, if he doth not spend more desire upon them than they be worth. A man may desire them for a good end as he thinks, but then he lays out too much upon them. A man may spend too much in his inn, when he takes it up only as a way to his home.

1. They are perishing things, therefore let them have perishing desires. "The world passeth away." They are passengers by us, that stay to rest with us for a time, let them have passengers welcome.

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2. They are not necessary things, let them have therefore indifferent desires: I must have Christ, and his Spirit, &c. not these things: They are to be sought not in the first, but in the second place. Therefore say first Christ, now let me have Christ: Men say now these things, then Christ. I say now the Lord Jesus, whether ever you have them or no.

III. Now all superfluity of evil desires are to be crucified, Gal. v. 24. "They that are in Christ, have "crucified," &c. Christ was not a dead, but first a crucified Christ before; so no saint living, but he hath some superfluous desires, but though they live, they do crucify them, so ought you. There are two things in crucifying,

1. There is extreme pain upon the cross.

2. A looking for death: So then lusts are crucified,

1. When you taste the bitterness of your lusts, by putting them on Christ's cross. O the wrongs they have done to the Son of God! And do this with violence, say, you shall to the cross, he that looks to Christ with a frolic heart to kill his lusts, shall never find him.

2. Now looking and longing for their death, by holding them there. Unless the blood of Christ slay these, I will never have any death for them. For all the reason in the world will never kill a lust, no more than all the reason will persuade the stomach not to hunger. The belly hath no ears.

Thus you are to moderate your desires after these things: Which I speak of,

First, Because it is a wilderness of sin, Psal. cxvi. 14, 15. Which it may be you feel brings leanness on your soul. And,

Secondly, Because it is the sin of prosperity and peace which God hath given us, which will grow up and choke the word, that all ordinances and truths will in time be sapless, savourless things unto us.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Because I have had strong fears lately of some unexpected trials among us, and I should be glad if it might not be, if the freedom from them might make us better, else I say let them come. But,

Fourthly, Because it is a rare thing among us to see such burning lamps as look and long for Christ's coming, which when I consider, though there be other causes, yet one great one is this, O the heart is gone away by violent lusts after these things here! O therefore take heed of them! And therefore consider,

1. You shall have Christ and his fellowship, if indeed you long for him, John. iv. 10. That is his love, you are not so desirous, but he is a thousand times more. Thou mayest desire these things, and if God loves thee miss of them. God will make thee poor when thou wouldst be rich, base when thou wilt be honoured, and when you would have honey, he will give you stings; and cause you have to thank the Lord too, that he will not give you your portion here.

2. If thou hast them, and dost desire them, and God gives them, and thou lettest Christ go, thou hadst better a thousand times be without them, Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31. "The meat was in their mouths, "and the wrath of God came upon them." If the Lord gives thee Christ, happy forever; if these things when thou dost so desire them, O woe forever!

3. The fellowship of the Lord Jesus thou shalt never lose. Death shall not part thee from that, nothing shall rob thee of that; but look after and long for these things, they will perish and die away. "All "flesh is grass, the word of the Lord," and the Lord himself much more "endureth forever."

4. Why dost thou desire these things? For some sweet in them. Why is not all that in the presence of the Lord Jesus, and enjoying him? "It pleaseth the Fa-
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“ther that in him should all fulness dwell,” so that thou shalt drink as out of a pure fountain all that is there. If there be any sweetness here, he gave it, it is much more eminently in himself, Exod. xxiv. 11. “They saw the God of Israel, and eat and drank.” Had they meat up with them? O no. But the sight of him was meat and drink and all unto them. As therefore you desire Christ’s fellowship, O long no more after these things here!

Use 2. Hence see death is not to be feared, but desired of all saints. It was an odd speech of a heathen, ‘It is ill to desire death, and worse to fear it;’ he meant not because of any good in it, but because we must die: But death brings us into eternal fellowship with the Lord Jesus. It does saints more good than all ordinances, all afflictions, (wherein we complain we can get no good) than all means. It brings us into his fellowship, 1. Quickly, as Christ was caught up, so the soul by Christ to himself. 2. Immediately; for the next thing we shall see is Christ himself, our husband himself, and then see the kingdom, and then wonder at the Lord. 3. Everlastingly, never to part more. O fear it not therefore, Christ has sweetened it to you.

S E C T. V.

Use 3. **HENCE** see a clear foundation and ground-work of longing for fellowship with the Lord Jesus in his ordinances here. This is that I shall exhort to. For

1. You cannot, shall not, must not now go to him in heaven, nor enjoy fellowship with him, nor meet him in the clouds, though you do long for that day; but in his ordinances you may meet with him now. And truly those whom we love and long for, if we cannot go to their house, or find them at home, we are glad to meet with them abroad. As with those
who

who stand before princes, if we cannot be with them on the throne, or at court, we will desire to be with them in the country, nay on the dunghill. O the spirit of David! Psal. xxvii. 4. "One thing have I desired, and that I will seek for," though I never have it. What is that, David? Is it to wear the crown in Jerusalem? Is it to have all thine enemies lick the dust of thy feet? Is it to have thy name spread, and thine honour great through all the kingdoms of the world? No; but "that I may dwell in the courts of the Lord's house all the days of my life," and that seeing I cannot, shall not die presently, and so go to see his glory in heaven, therefore that I may see his beauty here, enjoy him here, and that not for some years, but all the days of my life.

2. Ought you not to long to taste and pass thro' the sorrows of death, that you may be with him? And are Christ's ordinances more bitter than death, that you are loath to break through the difficulty of them, that in them you may enjoy him? The truth is so, it is with many a man, that such is his strength of his hidden contempt of Christ, and his love to his sloth, that he had rather die than pray, and be damned eternally, than to follow the Lord in an ordinance till he has found him graciously. How come God's own people to lament this, if there were not this?

3. I remember a sweet speech of one with God, 'That a christian ought to prepare for a sacrament as he would prepare to die; for,' saith he, 'there is but this difference, when we die we go to Christ, in a sacrament Christ comes to us.' What he said of a sacrament, I say of every ordinance, in every ordinance Christ comes to us, when we die we go to him. Now ought you to long when you are absent to be with him, and will you not care for him, nor long to see him and enjoy him, when he comes to you? And so be worse than poor naked Indians, Christ comes not to them, no dews fall down on their

Gilboahs

Gilboahs, no manna at their tent doors, and hence they live without him, and desire him not ; and when he comes to you, do you see no beauty in him now why you should desire him ? Will you thus requite him for his love, O foolish children and unwise ?

4. Truly beloved, you can have but little evidence, you do desire the Lord Jesus's company in heaven at the last day, that long not vehemently after him in his ordinances now. " You have followed me in the " regeneration," saith Christ, Mat. xix. 28. therefore " you shall sit with me upon thrones." If Christ's presence here, a little of himself be burdensome, what will it be in heaven then ? " Depart from me," saith Christ, " I was in prison and you visited me not." Shall you depart for not visiting an imprisoned, persecuted, sick, sorrowful Christ in midst of miseries, and shall not you depart for not visiting a comforting Christ, a teaching Christ, an intreating, embracing Christ in the midst of his ordinances. If the Lord tries you with water, with a little of himself here, and you care not for him, long not after him, and hence let all leak out again, how shall the Lord trust you with wine ? With full fruition of himself in heaven ?

5. O beloved have you ever found him in the ordinances ? If not, O the heavy wrath of the Lord Jesus upon thee : If you have, if ever he has comforted thee when sad and sorrowful, if ever quickned thee when death and darkness did lie upon thee, if ever he did deliver thee when distressed, O then take heed of despising him in his ordinances now, but long for him again, " That I may see thee as I have seen thee," Ps. lxxiii. 2. Let them that never found him deal so with him. Peter when he saw Christ's glory on the mount, " Lord, (saith he,) it is good for us to be here." Has the Lord ever transfigured himself before thee, so as he has appeared in another manner to thee in his ordinances than ever thou sawest before ? Then say, see-

ing Lord I cannot come to heaven to thee, it is good being in the mount, in thy ordinances with thee, it is good being here, 1 Pet ii. 2, 3, 4. I know brethren you have many employments in the world, and are called away to them, and cannot ever be with the Lord, yet let your longings be there, nay though cast out of God's sight, yet look to the temple; this will give you peace.

6. This if I may have leave to speak plainly, is the great sin, one of them, of New-England. Men come over hither for ordinances, and when they have them neglect them; or if it be too horrible to live in a gross neglect of them, yet who maintains his fellowship with Christ? Or longing after the fellowship of Christ in them? And therefore I shall stay a while on this point. Men that are sick of consumptions have sometimes a mighty stomach after meat, and when it is brought them, they are weary of the very smell of it, and then say, truly I had thought I could have eaten so much; so men loath ordinances, nay the cooks that dress, and the dish that brings, and the ministry of Christ Jesus that provides the meat, because consuming and pining away in their iniquities. I know many use ordinances, but are they not indifferent whether they find him therein or no? Now,

10. When men had enough by them to live comfortably upon, then God and his ordinances were desired by them; but here men's removing begetting want, want of the creature joined with fear and distrust of God's providence to provide for them and theirs, either sink their hearts, that ordinances are not sweet, no more than Moses's message to a people in anguish, or meat to a wounded man; or else makes them hungry after the creature, and hence lavishing out their desires, that they have none after the Lord himself.

11. When men are persecuted by enemies, driven into corners, or to towns six miles off to find a sacrament, or hear a sermon, then the gospel of peace, and

and them that brought the glad-tidings of peace; their feet were beautiful, and then men thought if one sabbath here so sweet where ordinances are much corrupted, if some of them be so comfortable in the midst of enemies, O how sweet to enjoy them all among saints, among friends? And so I know they be to some, and I hope to more than I know; but New-England's peace and plenty of means breeds strange security; and hence prayer is neglected here: There are no enemies to hunt you to heaven, nor no chains to make you cry; hence the gospel and Christ in it is slighted. Why? Here are no four herbs to make the lamb sweet. And if I get no good this sabbath, this sermon, this sacrament, this prayer, I hope I shall some other time, when my heart is better, and my business is over: Not considering that the days of trouble may be near, or God's final farewell may be quickly taken.

3. It was a sad speech of a brother lately, which has oft affected me, that 'A man may pray out, hear out all the grace of his heart:' Meaning this, when God begins to work upon a man's heart at first, then prayer and word is sweet, stay a while they hear out their hearing, and pray out their praying; so as in praying, they pray not; and in hearing, they hear not! Would to God there were not a generation of those men among us, that having been so oft sermon-trod and prayer-beaten, that now their hearts are hardened, and being used to ordinances, and being so long ridden under them, I wish they were not tired, and jaded under them before they come half way home, that they had rather lie and die in the high-way, than get up and with mighty groans and invincible wrestlings of heart seek after, and so find the Lord in them.

4. There is no place in all the world, where there is such expectation to find the Lord, as here, and hence men bless the Lord for our rising sun, when it

is setting every where else : Here therefore they come and find it not, hence not considering the great and last temptation of this place, whereby God tries his friends before he will trust them with more of himself, viz. deep and frequent desertions, they give in, and therefore care not for, nor desire after those plaisters which they feel heal them not, nor that food which they find nourisheth them not. It is strange to see what a faith some men have that can close with Christ as their end, and comfort themselves there ; it is not means (say they) but Christ, not duties but Christ, and by this faith can comfort and quiet themselves in the neglect and contempt of Christ in means, as infallible a brand of God's eternal reprobation of such a soul as any I know. So that this is New-England's sin. Is not prayer neglected, wanting place and heart ? If not in family, is it not in secret, yet doth it not die ? Didst thou ever find thy spirit so straitned ? Where are the mighty groans ? What is become of meditation ? Dost thou not let sabbaths, sermons pass over, which shall be preached over again at the last day, and find no Christ, no Spirit in them ; and thus lie famishing, and yet not cry for bread ? If it be not so, I am glad, God, angels, saints, and all the world shall call you blessed : If it be so, I dare be bold to prophesy ruin to this place and people, and that you or your posterity shall either in woods, or in the land, or in hands of your enemies in this place lament with tears the contempt of means ; and you, even disciples of Christ, " shall desire to see one of " the days of the Son of man ; and shall not see them." Jer. viii. 13, 14. " Let us go into strong holds," &c. I know there are many that do meet the Lord, but are you not apt to fall asleep again ? O therefore let me entreat you, if the Lord has espoused you to himself, if you have any longings after him in heaven, seeing those desires cannot be fulfilled presently, O long to meet him here, and so long to meet him, as that

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that you may indeed meet with him and with more and more of him.

S E C T. VI.

Quest. **WHAT** is it to meet Christ, and to have fellowship with him in his ordinances?

Ans. I have been oft asked this, and for the sake of them that be weak, I shall give you a taste of it.

1. Therefore look as it is with a man that receives any common mercy from God, from Christ, if he sees not the Lord Jesus really giving it, he enjoys it, but not Christ in it, though he get some good out of the thing: So let a man receive more knowledge of truths, and more truth be discovered, more promises revealed, more affections and life dropt into the heart, which may do a man some good, yet if he sees them as separated from Christ, if he sees not the truth as it is in Jesus, if he sees not promises spoken from heaven by Jesus, if he looks not on all commands as parts of the secret of Jesus, if he receive affections, and by them behold not the Lord Jesus, he doth not at that time enjoy the Lord Jesus. For he now indeed enjoys his gifts, but by these he doth not enjoy him. And therefore then a man may be said to have fellowship with Christ in an ordinance, when by all the light and life and comfort there, he comes to see him, and sees them all in him, and seeing a transcendent glory in him, sees and beholds a hidden glory in them. This command is a secret of Jesus, this promise the sweet voice of Jesus, these consolations the comforts of Jesus, these messengers the ministers of Jesus, these ordinances the kingdom of Jesus. And therefore look throughout all the scriptures, you shall see our fellowship with Christ both in heaven and here; it is exprest by "seeing of the Lord," John xvii. 24. Psal. lxiii. 2. and xxvii. 4. I have oft said to my friends, the great sin of christians is to see scrip-
tures,

tures, ordinances, truths, commands, blows, kindnesses, as not flowing from and abiding in the Lord Jesus, to see them separate from Christ, and not Christ and them together; and hence promises comfort not, because you receive them not as spoken by Jesus: Commands awe not, because not as the voice of Jesus: Every truth is not dear, because you see it not as the Bridegroom's voice. Parents that have had rude children, have turned them out of doors, they themselves have sent them cloths and money out of pity, but themselves have not been seen, that they might seek for a father's house at last: So when God is angry with some of his people, he doth send to them in his providences and ordinances, because he pities them, but himself is not seen. Why? That at last they might come home, and seek to see his face again, and say, What good does all this do me, if I see no God? I confess he that receives gifts from another, ought to be thankful; but a heart that loves and longs after the Lord, will say, here is blessing, means, truth, warmth, but Lord when wilt thou come thyself? O labour for this!

2. When a man feels the power of the Lord Jesus, in his ordinances; this is the second part of David's desire, Psal. lxiii. 2, 3. "That I may see" not only thy glory, but "thy power;" for there is never a child of God but feels a strong party within him against Christ, so that he cannot seek Christ, cleave to Christ, live to Christ; now you will find in some ordinances your hearts shaken and troubled for sin, and some desires and consolations stirred up, and hopes never to be as you have been: But, beloved, all dies and falls down again: Now, I confess there is somewhat of Christ in all this; but yet content not yourselves with this, because you want a power, or until you find a mighty power of Christ by little and little subduing sin; for when Christ comes into the heart indeed, he comes with his power, Psal. xxiv. 7, 8.

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“The Lord of Hosts, mighty in battle. His flesh is
 “meat indeed,” Col. i. 29. Christ’s power works
 in a man mightily. If you enjoy never such comfort,
 but find not a power in pulling down thy lusts, there
 is no Christ. If a man be sick, and he eats his meat,
 and great care be had to tend him, but the disease is
 stronger than the strength of nature and food; ask
 him, Do you eat? Yes, but it doth me no good; so
 here: Such comfort, such a Christ doth you no good,
 unless you feel a power. O long to meet Christ, and
 enjoy Christ thus!

Quest. How shall I do this?

Ans. 1. Mourn bitterly for the Lord’s absence, as
 for one of the greatest evils that can befall thee. For
 Christ’s presence will never be sweet to him that can
 live without him, and can you look for him then?
 John xvi. 22. “You have now sorrow which” he
 said, “filled their hearts, but I will see you again,”
 visit you, come down to you by my Spirit again, and
 you shall rejoice, and none shall take it away: And
 therefore it is noted, the first that had comfort was
 Mary, when she sat at the sepulchre weeping, John
 xxi. 11, &c. And therefore do but observe your own
 hearts, when your hearts have been soaked in grief,
 for want of or for the absence of Christ, O I have
 lived without him, and prayed without him, and heard
 without him, and spoke without him, him that hath
 pitied me, spared me, overcome me, laid down his
 life, sent his Spirit to me! that then you shall more
 or less see the Lord, and feel the power and presence
 of the Lord. O beloved, shall not heaven be sweet to
 you without him, and shall earth be sweeter than hea-
 ven, that you can live here without him? Beloved,
 whatever you account of it now, in hell the sting of
 all sorrows shall be this, O Christ hides his face!
 One frown shall be more bitter than death, than a
 thousand deaths, and shall it be so in hell, and shall
 not many frowns, many days be more bitter than
 death?

death? Shall it be so to devils, and not to saints? Shall the hiding of Christ's face from enemies be heavy, and shall not his friends take it to heart? If you do not, then think not to meet him, but that word and prayer shall be dead drink to thee; but if you do, I tell thee, if he manifests himself to any, he will reveal himself to thee.

2. Prize and love his presence, his face, the lifting up of the light of his countenance. Princes will not come, or if they do, not stay, or if they perceive their company is a burden, and is not esteemed; no more will the Lord Jesus. They that are fallen in love together will find out each other, though it be at midnight; prize Christ's company, and you will not complain for want of time, and say you cannot, but you will find him out in word, in prayers, though others be fast asleep, Mat. xiii. 44. When the man "sells all," now he "buys the field," has it, and enjoys it. You would have the Lord's company and fellowship, I believe you; but what will you give for it? I will tell you. It may be you will give him the hearing for it, and give him a few good wishes, and a few good words, and a little leisure. But will you turn the whole world behind your back, and whatever you have out of doors, that he may come in: That now it is not honour, nor wealth, nor life, nor ease, nor heaven, but him, and that not only in heaven but in his swadling-clouts, his ordinances here, believe it salvation is at your doors. Zaccheus being a low man of stature, gets out of the crowd, stands in the way, and the Lord bids him come down. Do thus when you come to any ordinance, I tell you, it is better than an host of angels compassing thee about with praises. O that you had the life of experience! Hast thou not found him better than friends, than means, than thyself? O that you would believe experience!

3. Make it not your task but your trade to seek for him,

him, that you may enjoy him here. Make this your business. Men make it not their main business to seek out Christ, but only some work they must dispatch by the by. They make it not their trade but their task which must be done. Esau would have the blessing, but it is his hunting that he delights in. You shall have a man that is a close worldling, come and hear, and joy therein, but his trade, his heart is after that, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Look but on a christian at his first conversion, what great gains gets he then? O it is his trade to follow the Lord, afterward he is idle, and then feels little, Mat. xiii. 46. Like a merchant, he ventures all, and then finds: Now you shall find him, Heb. xi. 6, "He is the rewarder, not of them that seek him" sluggishly, but "diligently." What do you else seek for? "Why spend you your money for that which is not bread?" Or if there be ought else that is necessary, let thy care be for him, and his care shall be for thee.

4. Look before thou comest to an ordinance, if there be no lust, no stumbling-block of iniquity that thou harbourst in thy heart, or sufferest to remain in the sight of God, Isa. lix. 1, 2. I have known in experience, and seen it in scripture of God's people and others have taken on that God hides his face, &c. And this has been found to be the cause, either some sin not yet subdued or mortified, or some sin that they have not gone for pardon of to the blood of Christ, and so unpardoned. When both these have been removed, the Lord has appeared, Exod xxiv. 10. After the covenant made by blood, "they saw the God of Israel." Ezek. xiv. 3. "Should I be enquired of by them that set the stumbling-block of their iniquities?" &c. Come therefore to an ordinance that the Lord would take away thy sin, do not come to it that you may be comforted in your sin, so that though there be sin in your heart, yet the Lord will not cast that in thy dish, when thou comest to him to

take it away. It may be you know none. "You know not what spirit you are of." Get the Lord to discover it thee.

5. O be thankful, and cleave the closer to Christ for a little: For that is the infinite mercy and love of Christ to his people, he lets them see their end, the height of grace and glory the Lord will bring them to, but makes them feel the want of it, and taste but a little, but the first-fruits. Now there is Satan's policy to make them slight what they have, because they have not what they would have. Hence Christ estranges himself greatly; Do you thus despise my love? O therefore cleave close to him for that little, and then see, John i. 50. "Thou shalt see greater things than these, the Son of God, and angels ascending and descending on him." Think that I feel or have the sense of any want of grace, and peace, and mercy, and Christ, O it is mercy! That I have the star, O this is mercy, this brought them to Christ himself afterward. O unthankfulness stops God's heart! God will never cease pouring out on thee, that art pouring out praises on him; for else man's kindness should exceed the Lord's.

Thus you see the means, now use them, and long for the Lord Jesus in them, and so long as that you may meet him; and do it presently, else you may seek and not find him, and "die in your sins," John viii. 21. A sad and heavy speech. Has God singled you out of all people in the world to enjoy him, and will you now forsake him, and be eaten up with your lots, and buried in the bellies of your beasts, or sit grieving that your estates are sunk? It may be hypocrites will forsake the Lord Jesus, but "Will you also depart?" Others care not for him, others long not after him, others give him no meeting; will you depart? "Lord, to whom shall we go?" O and long for more of him, "forget what is behind," and hear, and pray as if thou never didst so before, as if but

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now to begin. There is a plot afoot to make you loath ordinances, that so God may loath you : Men that are sick and like to die, can eat no common wholesome meat, but are now nourished by conserves, and alchermies, and spirits of gold : so when wholesome truths of God are despised, men are deadly sick, when any new-fangled device shall feed their fancy. The Lord keep you from it. O do you love and long for the Lord in them the more, for his Spirit, his love, his truth, his Christ, his company, his grace, his consolations, and then when death comes, you shall not need to fear it, but make it welcome ; and when conscience shall ask, do you think to be with the Lord ? O it shall be in thy bosom ! Lord, thee have I longed for, thee have I sought for, wept for here, because I could not come to thee presently in heaven. Now Lord let me come to thee, and so go triumphing to glory.

S E C T. VII.

Use 7. **HENCE** we see no christian ought to content himself with any measure of knowledge or fellowship with the Lord Jesus here. For if full, perfect and immediate fellowship with him in heaven and at the last day ought to be the mark he aims at, and journey's-end of all his desires, then he is not to sit down in the mid-way, but to breathe and aspire after still more and more of him. Thus Paul, though fully sealed with the Spirit, yet he makes this his mark, Phil. iii 14, 15, 16. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12, 13. The apostle tells them, the prophet looked after " the grace given in " their times, " therefore gird up " your loins, and hope perfectly for grace to be given you at the revelation of Christ Jesus." Men that have preferment in their eye, and are to come on by degrees to it, never content themselves with any (though they will not slight what they have) until they

come to their highest: You are born to great hopes, slight not what you have, but look after more, 2 Pet. iii. 18.

Hence three sorts are to be greatly blamed. For as it is with sinful lusts, so it is with spiritual, they are endless, infinite, and unsatiable; if they want, they are not satisfied? if they have, they are whet on in their appetites after more. O let it be so here!

1. Some there be that are so far from thirsting after more of him, that they have forsaken his fellowship, and lie still content: it should be so. Time was horror was upon their consciences, trouble in their minds, and heat of affection lasted, that their prayers were many, their tears abundant, they could not take their rest in the night, but pray they must, they could not hear of a sermon, but through wet and dry to it! and it may be the Lord "drew them with the cords of a man," and laid meat before them, and sweetened their labours with great hopes to them; but the Father not having drawn them with an invincible power, and knit them by an indissoluble union to Christ, they are now fallen off from Christ, John vi. 66. And if you observe it, he looks not after them, speaks not one word to them, because content to be without him. Would to God this were not the tempers of saints that know it was better with you once than now, and God "hedgeth your way with thorns," and gives you no rest. But O the grievous wrecks of professors! One can see some boards and planks at low water, but that is all, Jer. ii. 13, 14. The Lord will fetch you home if he loves you, by weeping crosses.

2. Some there are that fall not to forsake the Lord, but like the door on the hinge, and wheel on the pin, hang and turn about where they did. This God's own people are very apt to do, and hence the apostle warneth them to take heed of it, from a dreadful argument, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, 7.

First,

First, Because the Lord at first conversion draws his people sweetly, drives them gently; being weak and young infants, as yet keeps them in his arms, that they may find a greater good in him than in the world; but afterward he suffers satan to tempt, himself deserts them, leads through a wilderness of sins and miseries, that they may know what is in their own hearts. Hence now if they will have mercy, they must fetch it, fight for it, and overcome, now hence sloth is apt to prevail for a time, as with the disciples.

Secondly, Because before they have Christ, they feel a total want, afterward but a partial, and hence apt to be full and self-confident in what they have, their stomachs are staid by some bits, and hence the Lord is fain to withdraw the feeling of all that which they had before, that they feeling how soon that vanishes, might hunger after more: as the disciples could have been content with Christ's being upon earth with them, then saith he, "the Spirit will not come, hence away he goes, that they might have more of him in the Spirit. But this is too common with many hypocrites.

When men serve their turn of Christ. There is never a hypocrite living but closeth with Christ for his own ends; for he cannot work beyond his principle. Now when men have served their own turns out of another man, away they go, and keep that which they have. An hypocrite closeth with Christ as a man with a rich shop; he will not be at cost to buy all the shop, but so much as serves his turn. Commonly men in horror seek for so much of Christ as will ease them, and hence profess and hence seek for so much of Christ as will credit them, and hence their desires after Christ are soon satisfied. *Appetitus finis est infinitus.*

12. No hypocrite though he closeth with Christ, and for a time grow up in knowledge of, and communion with Christ, but he hath at that time hidden lusts, and

thorns that overgrow his growings, and choak all at last; and in conclusion mediates a league between Christ and his lusts, and seeks to reconcile them together: Christ saith, out with every lust, and let more of myself come; no, saith sin, let me stay here, remember what ease, what honour I bring you, I cannot leave you: Now a man moderates, I will keep my lust because I love it, but I will keep it as my burden, that I may have Christ with it. Christ calls to seek for more of him; lust saith no, the work is hard, and duties are difficult. And it is it may be to no purpose to seek, you have other irons in the fire, many worldly businesses: Now here men moderate; do not say thou wilt seek no more after him, nor indeed use means diligently for more of him; be sure only you give him some desires to be better, and this will serve the turn. The Lord Jesus woos many a soul whom he never matches himself unto; one comes and wins the heart afterward, and makes the match: so here; The lusts of a man's heart grow sweeter than Christ and his ordinances, and hence there is no heart to seek after more of Christ, when the match is once made with the world, and affections won, 2 Tim. iv. 10.

3. Some seek for more of Christ, but it is of an idol-christ, not as manifesting himself in and by a word: for look as any act of obedience is an act of will-worship and imagery, that we have not a particular demand for, or is not directly deducted from rule in the word; so that act of faith is an act of will-worship, which sees and chuses Christ as his own, when he has not a particular promise for it; it is an imagination of Christ, not Christ; and you have more of your own imagination, not more of the Lord Jesus, 1 Pet. i. 25. Monks had sublime contemplations of God; Luther calls them such as looked upon a *Deus & Christus absolutus*,—not beholding the beams of his love and glory in the word. O therefore labour

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hour for more of such a Christ, as the word holds forth. And look as in heaven,

First, They are all one with him in fellowship, the Father in him, and he in them, and they in him, and so made perfect in one.

Secondly, They have his fellowship only: so do you long for more of his fellowship, so as to be made more one with him, and him with you, so as he may be your strength, and life, and peace, and for his fellowship only; otherwise you may go without him at last, Luke xiii. 26, 27, "Have we not eat and drank in thy presence," &c. The Jews before Christ's coming had Christ's presence then, but a greater measure of it is given to the church since his resurrection and glorification; for it was reserved to honour Christ in his first coming. But how many are there that see not the Lord Jesus so as they did under vails? either get more, or say Christ is not risen, John xiv. 16. Christ promises to send his disciples another comforter: who was that? the Spirit of truth whom the world could not receive, because it knew him not: Why, had the disciples no Spirit now? yes, he was in them, but not that full measure, with which they were not as yet sealed, yet they knew they had him, and that Christ was theirs too. So hast thou the Spirit of the Lord Jesus? O beg for more of it, not for miraculous gifts, for that is in vain, but more of the special powerful presence and fulness of it; for it is that the world cannot receive. I have oft feared that it is the great sin of this last age to comfort and settle christians in their weak beginnings, as though there were no more of God's Spirit to be poured down in times of the gospel. But consider,

First, What came you into this wilderness to see? Reeds shaken with the wind? No, for more of the Lord Jesus; and will you now forget the end for which you come? It may be you never found less, no
but

but God is emptying of you that you might seek for more. Herod a long time desired to see Jesus, and then despised him.

Secondly, You have here more means to have fellowship with the Lord, and will you content yourself with what you have had. If you do, what can you look for, but that the Lord should take away ordinances, if they do you no more good, and ease you of the burden of the Lord of Hosts; or send sore and heavy trials: It is that I have oft thought of, why are the wicked exalted, and saints debased? the worst are not bad enough to receive their plagues, nor the best good enough to partake of blessings. You have had some means, to do you some good, here you have more, that you may receive more good, more life, more of Christ Jesus; if not, then look for fire to purge you if you be gold, or flames to devour you if you be but rottenness and stubble. But is this thus? the Jews did long for Christ, and when he came they crucified him, they loved the prophets, they shall have prophets and their blood too, to slay them; you love the messengers of Christ, &c. they have them Lord, but despise them, they have them, but condemn them, they have them, and though they will not cast them out of their places, yet they will so weary their spirits, and grieve thy Spirit in them, that they will make them glad to bury themselves, and leave their places. You shall have prophets and their blood too, and their tears and sorrows too. But why do I complain? Let me persuade: O labour for more of Christ in his servants, in his ordinances, in his providences, in his saints, until at last thy desires break thy vessel, and carry thee up to behold the Lord in heaven. If there were never saving work of grace wrought, but thou hast only rested in duties without Christ, now sell thyself out of all for him. If there be any that the Lord has settled there on his promise which never can be shaken, hold your steadfastness,

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fastness, but yet still grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

S E C T. VIII.

Use 5. Of Exhort. OH long to be with the Lord Jesus. Before a man has Christ, now his desires should be to have him; when he has Christ, now his longing should be to be with him. Do thus in this place, especially in this age. I have oft thought one great end of God's bringing his own people into this place, is to learn them to die, and be with Christ. Men have heard of Christ, and passed through the waves of death, and stood many a week within six inches of death to see Christ here; well, when you come here, God visits you with troubles, temptations, losses, desertions, fears for future times; here it may be you see (as some see) an "end of all perfection," church-builders, church-ordinances, church-professors, &c. or if they find the Lord, it is soon gone; why all is that you might long to be at home.

Motive 1. The Lord when he called Abraham out of his own country to his friends, he followed the Lord he knew not whither. You live now out of your father's house and from all your friends that long to see you, nay are left among enemies, and you know whither you are to go, "to God the judge of all, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

Motive 2. Look but upon the men of this world, they long for things here, though but temporal; tho' they have no Christ. O long for this though thou hast no world.

Motive 3. When Christ would needs go to Jerusalem, John xi. 16. saith Thomas, "Let us go and die with him," and shall not we go to live with him?

Motive 4. Did Moses forsake Egypt's honours, treasures, and embraced the reproach of Christ as far bet-

ter? O if God should set thee up in a throne, O depart from it to enjoy the glory of Christ himself in glory!

Motive 5. Grant death be dreadful, yet when soldiers see their captain upon the walls among the enemies, they will press hard after to follow, though they die in the breach. To part with sin is bitter, or to part with Christ; but to part with the body for a time, and cast off the clothes, this will be found to be exceeding sweet.

Motive 6. Friends that send to us, and provide for us in a desert place, we long to see them. Now who has clothed thee, comforted, pardoned, revived, found thee, kept thee that nothing hath hurt thee? nay that thy sins have humbled thee, and done thee good: O it is Christ! Wilt thou not say, who and where is he that doth all this?

Motive 7. O consider how glad the Lord Jesus will be of thee, though the world and thou art weary of thyself, Zeph. iii. 17. Luke x. 21. "I thank thee O Father:" so will the Lord say then.

Means 1. Labour for assurance that Christ is thine, else you will fear death and hell that follows it, and such an assurance as does not only chase away vexation and anguish of spirit, but fears, at least in the power of them: for there is many a christian can find the proposition true in the world, "He that comes to Christ he will not cast away;" the Spirit clears God's work, and his own experience, and saith, "Thou comest unto Christ;" now when he comes to make the conclusion, though he dares not sin against clear light and evidence of the Spirit, and conclude, "yet I shall be cast away:" yet he dares not, nor cannot for a time conclude fully; why? because of some fears, what if I should be mistaken, and when I die, all prove naught? and while this fear lasts you will not long (till needs must) to be with Christ; for while you fear or suspect Christ as an enemy, you will

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will not heartily love him, nor long to be with him : therefore get these fears removed.

Quest. How may this be?

Ans. Rom. viii. 15, 16. By the Spirit of adoption only ; for though I do not exclude the work of sanctified reason from the witness of the Spirit, yet this I say, that all the men in the world, nor all the wisdom and reason of man can never chase away all fears, scatter all mists, till the Spirit itself faith peace and be still, and puts its hand and seal to the evidence ; till the Spirit not by an audible, but powerful voice shews and persuades, Acts. xii. 13, 14, 15, 16. They had been praying for Peter, Peter knocks, the damsel faith, Peter is there ; now see their unbelief after such a mighty Spirit of prayer, " It is his angel," say they, and could not be persuaded till he came in and shewed himself. So the soul is praying, a man's own spirit goes out and sees there is more unbelief and fear, say no it is a delusion : Well the Spirit still knocks, and the soul opens, and then he comes in, and the soul is astonished. And that you may have it,

1. See there be no guilt upon thy conscience, no reservation, love, liking to some lust, Heb. x. 22. For these fears are commonly the fruit of guilt which is not washed away, but " by the blood of " sprinkling."

2. Pray for the Spirit, Psalm lxxxv. 4—9. say they, 1. " Turn us from sin. 2. Turn from thy " wrath," when the Father is angry, then no good word. 3. The end, " That our hearts may rejoice " in thee. 4. Shew us mercy." 5. Then they come to listen after it ; for many times a friend speaks not because he has us not alone.

3. Mourn heavily for want of it, Psal. li. 8. and for look for it in a word.

Means 2. Labour to partake of the fellowship of

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Christ's

Christ's resurrection, else no desires can be raised up,
Col. iii. 1, 2.

Quest. *What is that?*

Ans. Look as we then have fellowship with Christ, and with the church in miseries, when we from the serious apprehension of their sorrows, condole and suffer with them, so with Christ in glory, when from serious deep apprehensions of his glory, we reign with him; we are risen with him; for let a man be assured Christ is not his, if he knows not what the worth and glory of his fellowship is, a man will then never long to be with him: O therefore labour to comprehend this glory of the Lord Jesus, and that by the spirit of revelation, Eph. i. 17, 18. The word reveals the glory of saints, that there is a kingdom, that they shall be "perfect in one," that they shall have that glory the Father has given to Christ, John xvii. 22. O get the Spirit to shew thee the thing what this is; else something in the world will make you look back. There are false spies that vilify God's kingdom to his saints, O say it is a good God, and country, and Christ, and mercy, and love; "let me go up and possess it." O get the Lord to give thee but one glimpse of this.

Thus much of the first verse.

CHAP. XII. SECT. I.

Shewing that there are Hypocrites in the best and purest Churches.

Verse 2. *And five of them were wise and five were foolish.*

FROM this second verse to the fifth there is set down the difference appearing between the virgins, wherein he Lord, the searcher of hearts, makes an open discovery of the particular estates of these virgins

gins, for all the best churches especially to take notice of, to the second coming of the Lord Jesus. This difference is set down,

1. Generally, in this 2d verse.

2. Particularly, in the 3d and 4th verses.

I. Generally in this verse.

1. That some of them were sincere and wise-hearted to the number of five.

2. Others of them were foolish and false-hearted to the number of five more. So that the sum is this, one half of them were indeed virgins, another half were in appearance virgins; the one part were virgins in the sight of God, who saith they are wise; the other were so in the judgment of man, and hence called foolish ones. In this general description therefore of them, we may note,

First, Their description from the number of each sort, viz. five.

Secondly, From their different qualities or qualifications, holy wisdom or prudence in the one, sinful folly in the other. He does not say five were holy and five profane; five were friends to the Bridegroom, five were persecutors of him, but "Five were wise, and five were foolish." Why, the virgins are described by the number of ten, I spake before, either because it was a perfect number, and so signifies the estate of all virgin-churches; or because it was the custom not to exceed the number of ten, to honour them at their marriage. Now why five of them were wise, and five foolish, as though the one half of them only were sincere, the other false, this seems to carry the face of truth; but I am fearful to rack and torment parables, wherein I chiefly look unto the scope, and that is this, that not one or two but a great part of them were sincere, and a great part of them false. And hence the observations out of these words are these, omitting all the rest.

Observation. 1. That when the churches of Christ Jesus prove

prove virgin-churches : and are most pure, yet even then there will be some secret hypocrites that shall mingle themselves with them. Or, there will be a number of hypocrites, mingling themselves with the purest churches.

Observ. 2. That when the churches are virgin-churches, the hypocrites in those times will be evangelical. Or, The secret hypocrites of pure churches are evangelical.

Observ. 3. That there are certain special, saving qualifications of heart, whereby arises a great internal difference between sincere-hearted virgins and the closest hypocrite.

Observ. 4. That the spring or one main principle of evangelical sincerity or hypocrisy, lies in the understanding or mind of man.

S E C T. II.

Observ. 1. **T**HAT there is and will be a mixture of close hypocrites with the wise-hearted virgins in the purest churches.

This I might manifest out of several scriptures, from several times. Look but upon Josias's time, where there was as great a reformation as under any king before him, 2 Kings xxiii. 25. Yet Jer. iii. 10. and iv. 3, 4. Look on the apostle's time, and what apostacy afterward. The apostle complained of it, "Every one seek their own," Phil. ii. 21. "Many walk," &c. Phil. iii. 18, 19. Whom he could not think on "without tears." The mystery of iniquity began to work even then. Christ manifests this by divers parables, Mat xxii. 14. "Many are called," and so called as to come in, and so sit and not to be known, till the Lord looks on them. And here the wise-hearted could not discern and keep out, but opened the door for the five foolish. Look as it is said, Job i. 6. "There was a day the sons of God presented

“sented themselves before the Lord, and Satan came “in also;” so here. I shall not, do not speak of every particular church, but of the state of the churches in general. For it is possible there may be a Philadelphia, “a new Jerusalem which comes down from “heaven,” a “golden foundation,” and for a time “no hay nor stubble built upon it:” But this is rare, and not usual nor general.

S E C T. III.

Reason 1. FROM Satan, the ancient enemy of the purity of the church; he being an unclean creature himself, if he could he would make heaven itself unclean; but that is beyond his reach; hence he seeks to make heaven on earth unclean; hence he will get into paradise, and if he cannot come in the shape of a man, yet in that of a serpent to beguile and pollute innocency there: He will follow Christ into the wilderness, and tempt him there, and hence will seek to get into churches, to pollute them. And if he cannot pollute the church by unclean ordinances, he will then seek to defile it by unclean persons, Mat. xiii. 25. The tares be in Judea like the wheat, yet indeed annoy the wheat: And how come they there? They are sown there, *i. e.* hid for a time, and mingled, and die there too; Who does this? Why the enemy did it, so that Satan will do it. If there be a devil in the church, he will sow his tares.

Object. But we see him not.

Ans. No, it is therefore said “he went away,” his care is over, now they are sown. Look as it is the Jesuits policy at this day, the end of their order is to raise up the collapsed ruins of Rome, and to bring all Christendom (and if it be possible all the world) to the hellish bondage and blind obedience of the see of Rome. Hence some kingdoms, because they cannot conquer them by power, they seek to do it by craft; hence

hence they seek to lay their leaven and make their party within, from whom they may have intelligence, and hence they shall do well enough with them : So Satan seeking the ruin of the church, seeks to make his party within the church, for one of these three ends chiefly.

1. Either that he may divide the church, that when any error shall be hatched, he may have his party to maintain it, and his faction to plead for it. Or,

2. That he may corrupt it, if he cannot divide it, that the tares may suck out the heart and life and power of godliness in the hearts of the elect ; for you know it is not the briar but the ivy that sucks out the life and sap of the tree, and it is not prophane pricking persecutors, but seeming friends to the church, that suck out the heart and life of it. It was not Jeroboam's greatness, but the old prophet's gravity and seeming piety that sucked out the spirit and sap of the young prophet, 1 Kings xiii. That so by this little leaven he may defile the whole lump, and so provoke wrath against them all.

3. If he cannot do either, yet that he may blur and stain the glory of the church : For the greatest glory in the world is to see a temple built, not of stones or gold or pearl, but of living precious saints, holy to the Lord only and his Son, and the sight of which in heaven shall be one part of the glory in heaven. Hence Satan will do what he can to blur it ; that though the greatest glory God has, shines in his church, yet that he may blur it : And hence Jude saith, " Some that crept in unawares, were spots in their feasts." And 2 Pet. ii. 2. " By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

Reason 2. From the officers chiefly of a church, who when they should be full of eyes, as they are described, Rev. iv. And these eyes should be ever watching, they are then sleeping, Mat. xiii. 25. For it

it is not the having, so much as the acting of grace that helps men to read and understand the book of the scriptures, and the book of men's hearts and lives, 2 Pet. i. 9. Hence in affliction and temptation we know the Lord, and his mind, and our own hearts, and the world best: When Jonathan eats the honey, "his eyes are open." Now sometimes the watchmen are not acting, or watching, but sleeping, and hence those are taken for wheat, that indeed are but tares. The book has a fair superscription or frontispiece and they so sleepy they do not read it through, and so either see no fault at all, or if any, they be but errata in the printing, and weaknesses to be born with, or if they do, yet the man is commended, and has a name to live when indeed he is dead, and so this serves the turn, and though he comes in, yet they shall do well enough with him, though indeed they herein have but a wolf by the ears.

Reason 2. In regard of hypocrites themselves, who must be like themselves, ever to act for their own ends; for they ever have an evil eye; now it makes for their ends, to join themselves to the purest churches of the Lord Jesus.

1. Sometimes it makes for their honour: Hence you know the church of Sardis lost her power of life, for that is a burden; yet kept their name to live, for that is an honour. For if men live out of church fellowship, that is a great shame, and now they have little love from saints; indeed the wicked may honour them, but what is that to the honour of the whole church? Who would think Saul should have cared for Samuel, that dealt so plainly and sharply with him? Yet, "O honour me before this people;" that is the business. There are many excellent gifts Christ pours down upon his church; "Simon believes also," Acts viii. and would give any money for those gifts, that he might be wondered at as he was before. A man seeing other gifts, and the love

love they have thereby, even a Simon may desire such gifts, and a mighty power of grace to animate those gifts, and would give any money for this, that he may be wondered at. Some refined, polished spirits, scorn honour of base men; and hence fish for it elsewhere.

2. Their gain; it is strange that Judas follows Christ for the bag, that was so poor, yet he did, until he saw after three years and a half waiting, so little came in. So it is strange that men should seek to join poor churches for that, yet they do and will, so long as they have any lots to give, or purses to lend, or hearts to take care and provide for those that are joined to them. You shall have many poor christian men, but be kind and bountiful to them, you may lead them into any errors, catch them at your pleasure with a silver hook, until they see their gain grows little, and respect less, and then they fall off.

3. Their comfort for union to the church of God,
1. Covers their sin and hides it from the eyes of the world. Thieves walk without suspicion in true men's companies, and thus they make the "house of prayer a den of thieves," and this is some comfort. For hypocrites they can carry it cleverly that none see, though God see it is no matter. It will not be thought that a member of a church dares do such a wickedness, yet so it is sometimes. 2. Comforts their conscience in their sin; men love their lusts, but what, no respect to ordinances of Christ? yes, and so conscience is quiet, and sin lives too, Jer. vii. 3. Because there is much comfort in God's ordinances, and in attending on God there, not only verbal, but the visible gospel is sweet, the sacraments: hence they join themselves as in John's ministry, "You rejoiced for a season," not only in Christ, but in communion of saints, especially in dangerous times, that a man fears the judgments of God will come in those places where ever they live without them. And now they are quiet
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when got into the cities of the Levites, from the pur-
fuer of blood.

Reason 4. In regard of the saints themselves.

First, There is seen many times a divine majesty and excellency in them, which has a drawing virtue with it, that many out of respect to that, close with them, as Gen. xxvi. 27, 28. God makes Balaam to see Israel's glory in his tents, and he cannot curse (if he might have all the world) but must bless them.

Secondly, There is much charity which thinks no evil, that where they see evils, they cover them, where there is but little good appearing, they hope there is more than they see, the "king's daughter" being "all glorious within."

Thirdly, There is a spirit of humility in them, to think others that appear far better than themselves, until God discovers them, especially in that they are yet unsettled.

Fourthly, A spirit of desire to have all as near the Lord as they can, and though there be evils in them, yet they hope that will make them better.

Reason 5. From the Lord himself: who has,

First, Reserved this exact separation as one part of his own glory at his second coming: Then he shall separate sheep and goats.

Secondly, Because some are very serviceable to his church, and so to Christ, as *Caput politicum*, both in regard of outward means of subsistence, and also with edifying gifts: hence into his family he will let them come, being servants, and like carriers that carry another's money and wealth to him, and then turns them out of doors.

Thirdly, Because of a certain real yet not thorow work of the Lord, whereby he draws them to some fellowship with the church, the members, and some kind of fellowship with his Son; yet it not being a thorow, effectual, Almighty drawing they prove unsound, John vi. 65.

Fourthly, That the Lord might manifest the exceeding greatness of his wrath in some; for God's last end in all the wicked is to shew the greatness of it, Rom. ix. 21, 22. yet in some more than others: and hence raises them up in the church to great eminency of profession, and parts, and honour, that all the saints also may admire God's grace to themselves the more, that when "two in the field, one shall be taken, and another left," that they should sit in the same seats, and yet some called, others left, and of them that are called to leave many, and love me, and that men of great parts, and I a poor simple one to chuse such a base thing, to confound the wise, the mighty. But as it is said of Pharaoh, what meant all the miracles? all the humblings of heart? and yet he would not let them go: "For this cause have I raised thee up," Exod. ix. 16. "Of all that thou hast given me (saith Christ) not one is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. So here.

S E C T. IV.

Use 1. THIS serves to clear us in this country from a foul aspersions that is cast out of the mouths of pulpits upon us, that we hold the churches of Christ to have no hypocrites in them. We answer, that though if hypocrites could be openly and ecclesiastically discerned, they should not be received in, nor kept in, because matter fit to ruin a church are not fit to make a church: yet we say there will be tares and wheat, there will be chaff and corn, there will be wise and foolish virgins, there will be good and bad mingled together in the churches until the world's end.

Use 2. Of Advice. To the watchmen of the churches: Nay, to all that profess themselves to be their brethren's keepers; to all that are wise-hearted virgins, not to lavish your charity too far, it is a precious grace,

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grace, and you have little enough for them that are sincere, but to bear a jealous heart, and to labour for a quick discerning eye to find out them that will mingle themselves among you. This was the commendation and honour of the Ephesians, Rev. ii. 2. I confess it is a sinful extreme to cry down all the virgins as foolish when there be "five wise." Satan will seek to break the bond of brotherly-love by sowing false reports, and horrible suspicions: and it is a hard thing for a Paul after the Lord has wrapt him up to the third heaven in revelations, not to be puffed up, and in seeing himself at a distance from other men, not to despise and condemn them that have not risen so high as he, especially in a discontented spirit nothing will please them. A false heart when he sees more than others as he thinks, now thinks highly of himself, as some great reformer of churches and world, especially if men of shallow heads; and hence do censure and condemn all that do not magnify them, and reverence their judgments, and the dust of their feet. And yet it is another sinful extreme to swallow down all flies that be in the cup, and to think too charitably of every one that does profess. Children that have no children themselves, will make children of clouts, and then love them; and hence many a soul lies bleeding to death, because they have such tender friends as will not search them. And I doubt not but many in hell may say, O that I should live among such and such, and they never deal faithfully with me.

Object. If a man walk fairly, should I censure him?

Ans. No, but yet maintain a holy jealousy over them, as Paul did over the Galatians: This stands with love, as it was with Job, chap. i. 5. As it is with surgeons, it is love to cut to the quick. Love them because they appear to be Christ's, and are so to thee, and this shall have a reward; but yet be jealous in love, because there may be that hid which was never yet seen.

1. It may be thou mayest save a soul, and they will love thee; or else thou shalt clear justice by being a witness against them.

2. It is the chief work for Christ here, there being no profane ones among us, to overthrow the kingdom of hypocrisy, as well as of civility and profaneness.

3. You will save the Lord a purging and cleansing time; for when Christ purges not with the Holy Ghost in his saints and ordinances, he will with fire. Here I might give rules for discerning mens spirits, as,

First, Mark their speech; for "by thy words thou shalt be justified:" and many times one word will give a light to see all, as in Simon Magus: as with men in a labyrinth found out by one thread.

Secondly, Mark them that you see not grappling with sin and temptation; for if we see them without that they are not yet tried, therefore observe them here, here is their trial, when time of temptation comes.

Thirdly, Get thyself to stand at a distance from sinful men, from all the world; "We know we are of God," 1 John v. 19. As men that are in the water look only to themselves, but standing safe on shore, they see others drowning: I speak this because I fear the churches are so busy about their own things, that their watch is not kept: if they see no gross sin, then all is well.

Use 3. Hence be not offended, if you see great cedars fall, stars fall from heaven, great professors die and decay: 1. Do not think they be all such. 2. Do not think the elect shall fall. Truly some are such, that when they fall, one would think a man truly sanctified might fall away, as the Arminians think, 1 John ii. 19. "They were not of us;" I speak this because the Lord is shaking, and I look for great apostasies towards; for God is trying all his friends through all the

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the christian world : in Germany, what profession was there? who would have thought of it? The Lord who delights to manifest that openly which was hid secretly, sends a sword, and they fall; others in other places receive the word with joy, the Lord sends persecution, and fearing men more than the filth of sin, and anger of Christ, they fall: others stand it out there, and suffer and venture hither, and Issachar-like, see rest is good, and crouch under their burdens, and so they fall. Others have had sweetness in ordinances, the Lord departs, and so they fall. Others have corrupt hearts, and received the truth in the form, not in love, and stood in defence of the truth, not in love of the truth, the Lord lets error loose, and they fall. Well, never be offended at this, I am not, because I never knew man fall but he loved some lust, and was never broken from sin, and although this is not seen when they do fall, it offends not me.

Use 4. O therefore search your own hearts: when Christ said to the disciples "One shall betray me: Lord is it I?" say they: so when not one, but many, Lord is it I? O many a christian lies fast asleep, never comes to a thorough search, a strict watch. Do but consider this: 1. That in churches, nay purest churches, many may ly hid, not discerned. 2. Thou mayest be one. 3. If thou beest, that of all men living none shall so deeply sink in hell. 4. That all ordinances shall tend to this end, and all thy joys, all thy afflictions: and therefore O search before the Lord search, and say, Lord, as no man's punishments and plagues can be like mine, nor sins, if I perish, so, if pardoned, loved, never any shall have such cause to bless thee; and therefore take not up with weak and groundless hopes, but love that hand that smites and wounds thee; for this discovery is to awaken thee: But you have so much business you will not, cannot, &c. Consider what a fearful thing it is to be hung up as for a gazing-stock to saints, so an everlasting terror to the damned themselves.

CHAP. XIII. SECT. I.

Containing a Discovery of Gospel-Hypocrites.

Observ. 2. **T**HAT the most hidden hypocrites of the purest churches under the gospel are evangelical, or gospel-hypocrites.

For these that were foolish were not such as in appearance rested in the law, or in a covenant of works, but they had escaped those entanglements, and now were virgins that plead their interest in, and their communion and fellowship, and love-knot with Christ, they had now their lamps ready, and made much preparation for him, and they did wait for him, and verily looked to have eternal fellowship with him their beloved, insomuch that they took their flight so high towards heaven and Christ, that they passed for a time the discerning of the wise: for you must know that where the gospel comes, there are two sorts of enemies against it.

1. Open, and those are your justiciaries, that seeking to establish their own righteousness, and being puffed up with it, can with pretended good consciences in doing God service, oppose the righteousness of God.

2. Secret and subtle enemies, yet seeming friends, and these are your carnal gospellers that cry down all their own righteousness, and cry up Christ, and see nothing in themselves, as there is good cause so to think, and look for all from Christ, and yet these when the Lord comes to search are found false; and these are the worms that grow in this wood, in this building, in these churches. Thus it was in Christ's time, the church of the Jews had left their gross idolatries, yet this was their stumbling-stone, they sought to establish their own righteousness, and hence he came to his

his own, and his own received him not, and hence were cut off for this their unbelief, but others (divers sorts of them) did receive him, believed in him, John ii. 23. Many took hold on Christ, and he took no hold on them, wondered at him, and entertained him when others did reject him, as Capernaum did, yet under his woe. And these are the spots of evangelical purity, wens in the best bodies of the best constituted churches. Look but upon Christ's own family, John vi. 69, 70. The disciples professed when others departed, "Lord, to whom should we go? thou hast words of life;" yet saith he, "I have chosen you indeed to be for me, but one is a devil," viz. Judas the deacon stood not on his own righteousness, but was for Christ, and followed him, and yet in this evangelical angel without, is a devil within, because he still harboured his lusts within. This the apostle Paul foresaw, Acts xx. 29, 30. Some wolves without should come, and also some to cankers within should fret, that should draw many disciples after them (in a church bought by Christ's own blood) "speaking perverse things," pretending to draw disciples after Christ, but it is indeed after themselves; and Paul laments this, "Many walk," to wit, profess Christ and his cross, "yet enemies to it," Phil. iii. 19. This Christ foretels, Luke xiii. 25, 26. Many seek, many knock, and at last cry "Lord, Lord, open," and in their life-time they pleaded communion with Christ, yet "Depart ye workers of iniquity." Jude iv. certain men are crept in, turning grace into lasciviousness; for this is the very form of an evangelical hypocrite, in denying his own righteousness, to establish his sin, it is advancing Christ to advance his lust. The epistles of James and John are antidotes against this kind of poison, and I look on them as lamps hung up to discover these men, not but that these men are indeed under a covenant of works; for there be but two sorts of men, and

two ends of all men, hence but two covenants; hence those that are not indeed under grace, are under the law, and under the curse; but because the most subtle hypocrites appear or seem to be under grace, and their external operations are chiefly evangelical, hence I call them evangelical hypocrites.

S E C T II.

Reason 1. IN regard of the power of the word and gospel of life and spirit in such churches: for the gospel where it comes, as it advanceth the glorious and everlasting righteousness of Christ, so it knocks under foot all man's, as a means subservient to that end, and it coming with power and light, it would be too gross for hypocrites to maintain life by works: hence Christ is that which they look unto; for Christ when he preached, not only many "believed because of his miracles," but "when they heard his word," John viii. 30. Mat. xiii. in the parable of the sower, the word came with much power, that they received it with joy, and did believe, but fell by their lusts. And look as it is with the sun, there comes light and heat with it, so there comes

1. Truth to the mind, and conquers the judgments of hypocrites, that there is no life, good, righteousness, but in Christ, nor salvation but by Christ.

2. There comes some goodness of the gospel to the heart, that men hearing and seeing salvation wrapt up there, O that is sweet and good! and hence their affections and hearts are in some measure conquered by the power of the over-dazzling truth; and hence hypocrites being thus conquered, partly being of this opinion, partly tasting some good of it, desire it out of self-love, expect it out of self-delusion, and profess themselves virgins out of these principles.

Reason 2. In regard of the power of evangelical examples in the five wise virgins: for look as it is with

living

living men when the sun shines upon their heads, they cast their shadows that follow them; so when the Lord Jesus shines upon the souls of his own people, almost every honest sincere-hearted man will cast his shadow that will be like him; hence hypocrites in those churches which are commonly rather led by example than by rule, will be very like them, and imitate them: if they should not, what communion could they have with them, or what love could they receive from them? for there is a mighty power in eminent examples to overbear hypocrites, that if they will turn themselves into any form, they must into theirs, as in Joash; for there are two things in the carriage of the saints.

1. There is a condemning power in it; hence men fear to live unlike them.

2. There is a winning virtue in it, an attractive virtue; hence men endeavour to be and live like them, to be of the same mind, the same heart with them: and hence others take them, and they take themselves to be sincere, and hence they are evangelical gospel hypocrites that lie hid in these churches. Hence Zach. viii. 23. "Many shall take hold of a Jew's skirt, (I doubt not but some false ones,) we have heard God is with you." And as Christ when lifted up and risen, so saints draw hypocrites to them.

Reason 3. Because the gospel brings the greatest and sweetest consolations with it. Hence a man under the terror of the law, and sense of curse for his sin, will make his last refuge hither, and hide himself under the wing of the gospel, not so much out of love to Christ, or gospel, but because they serve his turn, and give him ease. Like men scorched with heat, and almost ready to die, the shadow of a tree is now very comfortable, and therefore there they sit; so these: Or as men with scalded arms, they put them into water, which gives them ease, no cure;

cure; but because it gives them ease, there they keep them. To here: Men have been scalded with wrath, O now gospel is very sweet, and so are eased by it, never cured by it. Therefore here you shall fire them, disclaim all works, and cry up grace only; where the purest churches are, there are usually great awakenings, there God is very near men, and made most manifest to mens consciences, and there are most soul-plagues, contempt of the Spirit of grace, and hence most dreadful torments of conscience, and fearful lookings for of judgment. Now hence it comes to pass when Christ is offered, and general notice given to mens minds, that yet there is hope and mercy for great sinners; this fills them with joy and peace, as John's hearers, John v. 35. and hence they believe as the stony ground that had some plowing, and hence received the word with joy and believed, Psalm lxxvi. 3. It is a prophesy of the kingdom of Christ, Antichrist tormented the consciences of men, Rev. ix. Men have no peace within nor without. Luther is raised up, and preacheth the doctrine of free grace, which a world of men looking to their ease, others in truth receive it; for some time before his death he cries to God that he may not live to see the ruins that were coming on Germany for their contempt. The law is the ministry of death, the gospel propounds great priviledges, with much more sweetness to sinners, and hence hither men fly.

Reason 4. Because the gospel yields the fairest colours for a man's sloath, and strongest props for that. Hence you shall see them walking in this garden. For the last sin God conquers in a man is his sloath. When the swine have no swill to eat, yet you shall find them in the mire of sloath; this "slays the fool-
"ish." Hence the best hypocrite will plead the gospel, it is troublesome to the flesh, to bear a daily sense of the sins and wants of the soul. Hence you shall Capernaum receive Christ, and wonder at his doctrine;

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trine; and yet Christ upbraids them, "they repented
"not," Mat. xi. 20. It is troublesome, nay impossible
for a man to break his chains and get his soul loosed
from his lusts, and free for the Lord. The gospel
shews all fulness in Christ, and that he must do all,
a sloathful false heart therefore closeth with Christ as
the end, but neglects him in the means. Why?
Christ must do all, say they, and hence if Christ do
drop upon their hearts, well and good, if not it is
Christ's fault, he is a hard master, that gathers where
he did not sow, and hence wrapt it up. A man's false
heart is weary of the yoke of Christ, and hence would
fain be eased of it. Now the gospel promiseth liberty
from the bondage and curse of the law, and a sloath-
ful heart can find out reasons to free himself from the
rule of it, as part of christian liberty, "this is our
"liberty in Christ Jesus," 2 Pet. ii. 19. And they
rejoice exceedingly that the law is dead as they did,
Rev. xi. 10. For the death of witnesses, because they
tormented them: I say again, they rejoice not because
the Lord makes them like himself, and because of his
image restored by the gospel, and because they feel
the power of it, but because they are free from the
power of it. It is an old deceit, yet subtil to rejoice,
and love, and bless Christ, because he will pardon sin,
though I lie and live in them. Or if they do not
free themselves from it, the gospel shews the law
within closing with the law without, to be an evi-
dence the Lord will not impute it, and that it is not
they, but sin in them. Hence a sloathful heart will
continue in his sloath, and to ease himself of trouble
for sin and obedience too, say, it is not he, but sin.
And hence Arminius makes a strange intercession of
Rom. vii. Because he saw German professors plead
that for themselves, the Israelites entered not into
Canaan, unbelief caused it: And why did that shut
them out? O there were walled towns and difficulties,
and this was the last shock, and hence they fell off;

so it is in hypocrites now. The safest place to lie asleep is in Christ's lap.

Reason 5. From the mighty cunning of Satan, the strength of whose kingdom is made and continued by peace, Luke xi. 41. Hence "he will turn himself into an angel of light," and suffer men to go to Christ and gospel, to avoid the search, that they may be Christ's in appearance, and his in deed, 2 Cor. iv. 4. He has a mighty power over men to blind them: For there be three things which trouble men usually, and make them question their estates, and the gospel quiets and absolves them from all.

1. Conscience, that cries dolefully sometimes, these sins shall have these woes. Yes, unless I believe; but I believe, and trust to Christ, and flee to God's mercy.

2. Ministry, that cries and searcheth into the deepest windings of men's hearts, that men cannot but see that Christ has eyes of flaming fire to see through them. Now hence men avoid the stroke and power of all ministry, thus it is with me, thus it will be with me, but I believe and trust to Christ. And hence men bear back like brazen walls all blows.

3. God's judgment-seat. What tho' men see you not, yet God seeth. Why, they have sinned they confess, but Christ has suffered; they have sinned, but they trust, &c. Micah iii. 11. "Is not the Lord among us?" Look as it was with Joab, "he runs to the horns of the altar," yet there he perisheth, there he would die, there was the last refuge from search and death, so here.

S E C T. III.

Use 1. **HENCE** do not think your estates good, because you look only for justification by Christ, and look only to God's free grace, and count of grace in Christ. It is a common error for men to think, be-

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ing they be of this opinion, only to look for grace in Christ, to think that therefore their estates are false, and they are justified by Christ. Why there may be such a power of word and spirit to conquer their judgments as those papists that have been pleading against it, have been overcome by it. Thou mayst receive the notions of it in thy head, but the power of it never into thy heart.

Object. 1. But my heart has been affected with this to see when my sins deserve death; yet there is mercy for the vilest in Christ.

Ans. Thou mayst taste and joy, and yet fall off at last.

Object. 2. But I have fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

Ans. Thou mayst eat and drink in his presence, and yet be bid, "Depart, I know you not, a worker of iniquity."

Obj. 3. But I have "escaped the pollution of the world," 2 Pet. x. 20. And that through this knowledge of Christ, his love has much moved me to part with my sins.

Ans. It may be so, and it may wash thee from all external pollutions, and yet thy swinish nature remain still hidden from thee, but seen of an all-seeing God.

Obj. 4. But I look for Christ, and wait for him, and desire him, and all that are wise think well of me.

Ans. You may do all this, and yet you may be found foolish for all this. Evangelical work, which is accompanied with salvation in some, it may be hypocritical in thee: And therefore take heed you do not take shews for substance. For look as in the gospel God's utmost perfection of wisdom and love appears, so the most hidden and admirable delusions of Satan are evangelical. There his power is employed to undermine, and so to keep his head. O that

that we could but imagine and set before our eyes the amazing condition of such a man! whose plagues shall be made wonderful, that has been troubled with sin a long time, at last looks to Christ, and there rests, and so hears all sermons, and there still sleeps, and considers often that his ways are evil, but never suspects his faith to be evil, then he comes to die, and then looks for Christ; at last the wick or snuff dies, and sun sets, and darkness approaches, and then suddenly slips into hell, where he sees Christ and saints afar off: And what has deceived them? O there faith has deceived them, to see Christ shaking them off as dust: O they wish, O that I had known or feared this before! and will you not fear now? As for you profane ones that can scoff, and drink, and break sabbaths, and live idly, your judgment is writ upon your foreheads: but O take heed you that have escaped these pollutions, lest you deceive yourselves here. To shew you that deceit particularly, it is not my time yet, but go alone and think sadly of it, I may look for justification by Christ, and wait for Christ, and yet perish. O let me be sure I get such a faith as will not deceive me here: Should not a man, you will say, trust Christ? Yes, when you can in truth; but thy trust may be but presumption.

Use 2. Take not up therefore every opinion and doctrine from men, or angel, that bears a fair shew of advancing Christ; for they may be but the fruits of evangelical hypocrisy and deceit, that being deceived themselves, may deceive others too; Mat. vii. 15. "Beware of them that come in sheep's clothing," in the innocency, purity, and meekness of Christ and his people, "but inwardly are wolves, proud, cruel, sensorious, speaking evil of what they know not, by their fruits you shall know them." Do not think beloved, that Satan will not seek to send delusions among us; and do you think these delusions will come out of the popish pack, whose inventions
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smell above ground here? No, he must come, and will come with more evangelical fine-spun devices. It is a rule observed among Jesuites at this day, if they would conquer religion by subtilty, never oppose religion with a cross religion, but set it against itself; so oppose the gospel by the gospel: and look as churches pleading for works had new invented devised works; so when faith is preached men will have their new inventions of faith; I speak not this against the doctrine of faith where it is preached, but am glad of it; nor that I would have men content themselves with every form of faith; for I believe that most men's faith needs confirming or trying, but I speak to prevent danger on that hand. For it was that which Christ did foretel, Mat. xxiv. 24. "Many false Christs should arise," *i. e.* such as should misapply Christ, that had a spirit for Christ, which was a spirit against Christ, and would "deceive if it were possible the very elect;" for coming with Christ's Spirit, they dare not oppose them, lest they oppose the Spirit of Christ; the only remedy is to hold to Christ's word, and to depart one hair's breadth from it, Rev. iii. 10. and to a word well understood, and then dispute no more. Satan comes to Eve, and bids her eat, no God forbid, yet eat to be like gods; he dazzled her with that which was not: Now she fell. Take the truth from what the word saith, and depart not from it.

Use 3. Here see the dreadful estate of all them that be found false-hearted in the purest churches, and that in these three respects.

First, That they should so horribly forsake and blaspheme the name of God, to make the glorious gospel of God, and all the sweet doctrines of grace a cover for their hypocrisy and sin, as indeed it is; for were it not for this, they might be found out in their

L 1 sins,

fins, but now they are beyond the discovery of all men, or means.

Secondly, That they should be so lamentably forsaken of God, as to be left,

1. To the most subtle and spiritual hypocrisy in the world, which being most cross to God, shall receive most fierce and searching wrath. For as divines say of Christ, he was forsaken in soul, because man had sinned with his soul: so God's wrath will search deep in their hearts, whose hearts have guilefully departed from the Lord.

2. That he should lead them so far, and yet in the main forsake them; O this is heavy wrath, for a man to be led in the day-light of the gospel, almost to the end of his journey, and at last the sun sets, and he left to wilder.

Thirdly, In regard of the cries of the very gospel itself against them. O that the precious gospel of God coming with so much peace, love, grace, mercy, should win them to be hypocrites, but never to be friends. Beloved, as there is vengeance of the law, and of the temple, so there is vengeance of the gospel when the soul shall be drawn before the tribunal of Christ, and shall stand there quaking, all sins set in order before you, and your mouth shall be stopped. What say you then for your life? O grace and mercy Lord, O now shall the gospel come forth and say, all this I did, I spake, I strove, I comforted, I terrified, and yet he hath opposed the Lord, and me, he hath made a cover for all these evils, and therefore Lord let him never be comforted more, John iii. 19. O Christ hath heavy things against these times, that take light of the gospel to see to commit their sin by! And therefore lament your present estates, you that know yourselves naught, never yet drawn to Christ, never yet humbled at the feet of Christ, and look up to the Lord whatever misery he inflicts, not to suffer thee to be deceived

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deceived here; not only to have such a faith as may catch hold on Christ, but he on thee, and come unto the light to manifest the hidden enmity there. Never was yet man deceived, but he that was willing to be deceived, that would not use the means, and search.

S E C T. IV.

Use 4. ALL you therefore that live under the light of the gospel, consider if it doth not nearly concern you to search and try yourselves, whether you, or some of you may not be evangelical hypocrites; the time is coming that you shall stand before the tribunal of God, wherein the hidden things of darkness shall be brought forth to light, and it will be too late to know yourselves then: O therefore search now. No man's misery will be so great as this, if your heart be found false. I shall speak in a manner but generally now.

Sign 1. Those that do believe, and yet fail in respect of the efficient cause of faith, it never had the right maker, never came out of the right shop, nor mint, it was never a faith of God's making, but a faith of your own making; so that it is a base bastard faith, that though it be born in the house, it shall never possess the inheritance, because it was never begotten of the right father, the Lord never wrought it, but themselves; for many a man is convinced by the law, and spirit of bondage, that he must die, and that he is a most grievous sinner, and that when he has done all, he is unprofitable, but yet he trusts to Christ, and God's mercy, and so believes, he finds no great difficulty in this, nor no great need of the Almighty power of the Lord to work this, and all men living shall never make him think but that he does heartily and truly believe: but ask him, Have you no doubt of your estate, and of Christ's not taking hold of you when you take hold of him? Yes,

but seeing he has been troubled about his estate, and repented of his sin (in his fashion) and reformed himself and family, and loves the best things, he believes without question, and so misapplies promises to himself, never feeling a need of the revelation and donation of Jesus to him by the Father, and thus the Lord finds this man a Christ, and this man finds the Lord a faith, and the Lord Jesus redeems this man by price, and this man redeems himself by power, and so the Father shall have some glory for providing a Saviour, Christ shall have some glory for paying a price, and the Spirit of Christ, which only can draw to Christ, shall lose his glory; and so this man may take it to himself. And is this good think you? Col. ii. 12. "Risen with Christ through faith of the operation of God," 1 Pet. i. 3. "The same power that raised Christ from the dead, must raise you to a lively hope," Mat. xxii. 1, 2, 3. One man came from his hedges and high-ways to the feast of the promise and ordinances of the gospel, till the Lord saw him without Christ; but John vi. 64, 65. "Unless the Father reveals Christ's face," the Father persuades thee of Christ's love, "you can never come to Christ," men know not thy hypocrisy, thou dost not, but Jesus doth, and what good will thy faith do thee then? It was a sweet speech of Christ, "thy faith has saved thee." O heavy when it shall be said, thy faith has damned thee, that which I thought to be the way of life, is the way of death; truly so it will if you do not fetch it out of heaven.

Sign 2. Those that do believe, but they fail in the object, *i. e.* they close with Christ, but they know not who he is: that as the woman of Samaria, that had some lookings to the Messiah, she did worship whom she knew not: so men believe in one whom they know not, only have heard the fame of. For there are two things in the gospel. 1. The outward words and letters. 2. The things contained in those words:

words: Hence there is a double knowledge of Christ,

1. A fantasy knowledge, as a man that hears of any thing absent, presently fancies the thing in his head.

2. There is an intuitive knowledge, whereby the soul doth not only see words and fancies, but beholds the things themselves: Hence it comes to pass that many a man hearing the fame, and receiving the fancy of Christ, believes in him, but not seeing him as he is, therein he believes in one whom he knows not: and hence the Lord Jesus may be a hid thing to many a man, and the gospel a sealed book, though he lives and remains in the very light of the sun, and that all his days: Hence Christ laments Jerusalem, "O that thou hadst known, but now hid, hid;" and yet Christ preached. Yes, Deut. xxix. 4. "You have heard and seen, and yet the Lord has not given en a heart to see to this day;" so it is with many a soul, you have heard with your ears the great things of the kingdom of God, yet the Lord has not given you eyes to see; you have seen deliverances on sea, yet the Lord has not given you hearts to understand: and if so, all your faith is naught, and profession and affection vile, and estates miserable, 2 Cor. iii. 18. "All we with open face," &c.

Object. *But many see it not so.*

Ans. I confess some may see more darkly, and be mourning under it, yet he that doth not in part, he to whom it is hid, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. is one of them that be lost, whose "eyes Satan has blinded," John vi. 45. "He that has heard and learned of the Father:" Many hear, but never learn of the Father; hence never come truly unto Christ; it is in this case, as it is with a traitor, he comes to the king for his life, and prays for his son's sake; the king sends for him, and saith, Here is one that begs for your sake, do you know him? For my sake! I wonder on what acquaintance, he is a stranger to me, and therefore I regard him not: So here.

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Sign 3. Those that have some kind of sight of the object, and see Christ, but there is a wound in the subject, because their faith arises and springs out of an ill soil, it is in such a party that never was yet thoroughly rent from his sin, and here is the great wound of the most cunning hypocrites living: for there are two things in him,

1. A carnal heart, which cannot be satisfied with a spiritual good with Christ; hence he must have his lust.

2. A convinced conscience, which cannot be quieted without Christ and mercy; hence men close with Christ, and their lusts too. Look as it was with the stony ground, and thorny soil, they believed, but had a stone at bottom, "but roots of bitterness," &c. These men can sometimes plead acquaintance with Christ, Luke xiii. 26, 27. yet "workers of iniquity," 2 Peter ii. 19, 20. Some had escaped the pollution of the world, (that you may do) but a swinish nature lasts, that they never felt, or grew not in the feeling of it, and loosening from it: as with apricot-trees rooted in the earth, but leaning on the wall, so they on Christ. O consider of this, let a man be cast down as low as hell by sorrow, and lie under your chains, quaking in apprehension of terror to come, let a man then be raised up to heaven in joy, not able to live: let a man reform and shine like an earthly angel, yet if not rent from lust, that either you did never see it, or if so, you have not followed the Lord to remove it, but proud, dogged, worldly, sluggish still, false in your dealings, cunning in your tradings, devils in your families, images in your churches: you are objects of pity now, and shall be of terror at the great day; for where sin remains in power, it will bring faith, and Christ, and joy into bondage and service of itself.

Sign 4. Those that believe, yet fail of saving faith in regard of the very act of believing and closing with

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with Christ, viz. they close with Christ, but it is without a high esteem of him, or love to him, they have some, but right grace consists in a kind of sum-mity, or excellency, else it is not right, 1 Pet. ii. 5. To you that believe he is precious, and hence it comes to pass,

1. That some never come to find or enjoy Christ, because they will not come off to the price of him, to sell themselves out of all for him.

2. Some sell him away again in time of temptation, like Esau that sold his birthright, and never make any thing of it; because the bond is not strong enough, down they fall from him.

3. Hence comes all a man's uneven carriage.

4. Hence comes sometimes the unpardonable sin, Heb. x. 29. Many a man lays claim to Christ and his blood, and righteousness, that never knew the worth of it; and this is Christ's complaint methinks in heaven, (and of saints on earth) "He comes unto his own, and his own esteem him not," his own love him not, his own receive him not: him that is the glory of heaven, the beauty of the Father, the delight of saints, the wonderment of angels, he I say is not esteemed by many a man, that in his judgment esteems him, and in his heart does despise him. There are two parts of this esteem. 1. To esteem him only, John v. 44. 2. Him ever and alway, Psalm lxxiii. 26. "Thou art my portion forever." Many say they esteem Christ, but to be ever loving him, ever looking on him, this is not their frame. O think of this, fail here of your valuing of him, and you fail every where.

. Sign 5. Those that believe, but they fail in their end; and these may for a while in a hot fit prize water, prize Christ and mercy above all things in the world, but their end is naught: so that men here may ask and never have, because of their lusts: As a man that lies on his death-bed, or in a sea-storm in fear of

of hell, he may now prize and take hold on Christ to save him. A man lies upon the bed of horror of heart, he may prize Christ to comfort him, and getting a conceit of it, be wrapt up almost in an extacy of joy, that a man would think he was sealed with the Spirit of Christ, and yet his end being naught, Christ only to comfort him, misseeth of Christ in conclusion; for when a man believes indeed, he receives Christ for the end the Father sent him, viz. to be king and sovereign of the whole man as well as Saviour, Psalm xxiv. 7. "Open your gates that the King of Glory," &c. Rom. viii. 38. "I am persuaded nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord;" our Lord as well as Jesus. Indeed John vi. 15. some did receive Christ to be King, but it was that he might be their cook; he provided loaves for them; so here. Psalm lxvi. 2, 3. "Because of thy power thine enemies shall flatteringly submit:" it is but flattery, not faith; look to it therefore.

Sign 6. Those that believe, but fail in regard of the use of the gospel, and of the Lord Jesus, and these we read of, Jude iii. viz. of some men that did turn "grace into wantonness;" for therein appears the exceeding evil of a man's heart, that not only the law, but also the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus works in him all manner of unrighteousness; and it is too common for men at the first work of conversion, O then to cry for grace, and Christ, and afterward grow licentious, live and lie in the breach of the law, and take their warrant for their course from the gospel; I shall not name all the ways that men do so, but I will only speak that which conscience and compassion moves me to; not to begin, but if possible to still division, and what I shall speak shall be by way of prevention.

1. Take heed of making graces in a christian the weaknesses of a christian; for this is to make darkness light, and grace wantonness indeed: Is it not? Take heed

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heed then of thinking or saying counterfeit or false sanctification consists in feeling something in a man's self, as love to, delight in the Lord and his ways: True sanctification in feeling nothing, no love, no delight: Why the apostle Paul knew "that in him, *i. e.* in his flesh dwelt no good thing," but he calls it flesh there, and groans under it, yet he felt a law within closing with the law without, and blessed the Lord for it, and that was himself. Do you think the Holy Ghost comes on a man as on Balaam, by immediate acting, and then leaves him, and then he has nothing: Yes beloved, know you not Christ is in you (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) as well as out of you; in you, comforting, dwelling, sanctifying, preparing the heart for himself. Indeed to be puffed up with grace, or rest in it, is a sin, yet that grace is not that sin.

2. Take heed of making weaknesses graces or duties: as

First, To make poverty of spirit, the sight of nothing in a man's self; why, he that is poor has heaven for his, and so Christ and promises, and has faith his, at least some seeds. Now to see nothing now, is to see an untruth, and to tell a flat lie to God, and men, and scripture too. Indeed a man that is poor doth usually see nothing, but that is his weakness, not any grace.

Secondly, To say there is no difference between graces of hypocrites and saints. Why so? Because I cannot see any. Is this your weakness or your wisdom, you can see none? And will you make your weakness your religion?

Thirdly, That a man must not evidence his justification by his sanctification, I speak of that which accompanies salvation. Why so? Because then there will be comfort to-day, and sorrow to-morrow; grant it, but then consider, 1. That is either a man's weakness and ignorance that he doth not see it, or 2. His wickedness and carelessness that has stained that work:

And will you make this a duty, a grace? O but many have been deceived here; grant it, and will you make your wretched baseness of heart the foundation of this conceit!

Fourthly, That a man must see no saving work, nor take comfort from any promise until he is sealed: No: why so? Because many tall christians have deceived themselves so, and deluded themselves there, and been kept off from Christ; and truly I believe it in part. But what of that? Shall mens weakness be my religion or work? No, beloved, for a man believes before he is sealed, Ephes. i. 15. And hence Christ is his; and now for him to deny Christ to be his own, is to make Christ a liar, 1 John v. 10, 12, 13. not that I would have christians content themselves here (it is a sign you never knew what Christ meant if you do so) till he shall send a more full gale of his spirit.

3. If you do account them weaknesses, yet take heed your closing with Christ do not cause you to make a light matter of sin, either not to take notice of sins at all, only look to Christ, (it is not I but sin as being the act of the outward man: one calls this to unknow a man's self) or not to be deeply sensible of them, and so use Christ as your shoe-clout to wipe them off; O this is dangerous: the spirit of joy never quenched the spirit of sorrow. Capernaum entertained Christ, and yet perished: O she repented not! What must we repent after we be in Christ? Yes, Jer. xxx. 19. "After I was turned I repented." It argues a bold conscience, when men, as they look to no good themselves, so to no sin in themselves, but wholly to Christ.

4. Take heed of those doctrines which in shew lift up grace, but indeed pull it down, or any part of it, as,

First, To think that the letter of the whole scripture holds out no more than a covenant of works, a most

a most prodigious speech, though coloured with advancing a spiritual covenant of grace, and no word but Christ.

Secondly, Under a shew of advancing God's grace in doing all, to say the ordinances are not means, but only occasions of conversion.

Thirdly, Under a shew of giving all to grace, to abolish that plain truth, as to say we are not justified by faith, which though it be true, not really, *i. e.* not simply, by faith in itself considered as a work, yet to say [not relatively, as the Lord is apprehended by it] it is false. If we cast off the power of the truth, yet let us not cast off the form of it: keep the form of wholesome words as well as truths.

Fourthly, Take heed of maintaining that a man until sealed is not persuaded to believe, under a shew of letting the Spirit of Grace do all. And brethren doth not the Spirit of Grace accompany the word of grace? are not evangelical commands part of that word? is there not a power going along with them? what is this but to take from God's book? and he that so doth, God will blot him out of the book of life, Rev. xxii. 19.

Fifthly, That a christian is to gather no assurance from particular conditional promises under colour of receiving all from Christ and grace. True, them that have nothing to do with them, ought not; but for those that have to do with them as their inheritance, not to apply and make use of them for their comfort, it is to trample under foot Christ's blood that has purchased them for that end, and it is to raze out in our practice the greatest part almost of the covenant of grace.

Sixthly, That the law ought not to be our rule of life under a shew of being freed from it by Christ, as though Christ came to set hell-gates open for men to do what they please. Shall I say any more? I am weary with speaking, I desire rather to go aside and

mourn, and to think there is somewhat amiss why the Lord lets these out. You that are sincere, search and keep close with Christ, and fetch more life from him, and though accounted under a covenant of works with men, yet rejoice, you know it is better with you in his sight. And you that are weak, beware, and take heed, and do not consider what I, but the Holy Ghost has cleared this day: and as for all them that do turn grace into lasciviousness, not intentionally, but practically; not in all things but some things: consider this scripture, Jude iv. men "ordained to this condemnation;" they thrive, and have no hurt, and they joy, O but they have condemnation enough upon them. Do but consider ver. 12, 13. "Twice dead," dead in Adam, then quickened by Christ with common gifts and graces, then die and turn grace into wantonness, for whom is reserved the very blackness of darkness for ever. They bring in painted profaneness.

Use 3. O take heed then, lest you fall short of Christ by unbelief, Heb. iv. 1. Christ must do all; O but take heed, use means, and then put the work into his hands to make faith right, Heb. xii. 1, 2. "Looking to Jesus the author and finisher." Suppose Christ was here on earth, and thou shouldst beg it, would he deny thee? O no; beg hard therefore now.

CHAP. XIV. SECT. I.

Shewing that there is a vast difference betwixt a sincere Christian, and the closest hypocrite.

Doct. 3. **T**HAT there is a vast and great internal difference between those that are sincere indeed, and the closest hypocrites. Or, there are certain qualifications within, and operations of God

God upon the souls of the faithful, which make a very great difference between them, and the closest hypocrites.

For the Lord Jesus here sees the difference, and shews the difference, though but generally I confess in this verse; some were wise, others were foolish; wisdom and folly are different qualities, and though these keep their residence chiefly in the mind, yet the Lord never did infuse any true wisdom into the mind, but there was a great change of the heart, nor never was any man left unto his own folly, but it did not only argue an evil heart, but did ever arise from thence, Eph. iv. 18. so that Christ not only sees, but discovers to the churches a vast difference for them to take notice of: I confess the difference was not only in regard of open profaneness, or common conversation in living like men of the world, yet a difference here there is. For the opening of this point, I shall open these particulars.

1. That the Lord does make this inward difference.
2. That it is so great that the faithful do see it.
3. That it is so great that others cannot receive it when it is offered.
4. That it is so great that they cannot understand it.
5. The reasons why the Lord makes this internal difference.

1. That the Lord does make it: only some scriptures now, Eph. v. 8. "You were darkness now are light." Eph. ii. 1. "You were dead, now are alive." It is true there is a life hypocrites have, which puts much difference between them and others; but if that does, what does the life of Christ in a man arising from the death of every sin? Acts xxvi. 18. The Lord turns not only from "darkness to light," but from the power of Satan to God," together with which arises remission of sins. What is this then but a greater change than from hell to heaven? Is it not

not worse than hell to be under his, not only temptations, but power? And is it not better to be with God, and be in heaven?

2. It is so great that the faithful do see it. I confess at first work it is like a confused chaos, they know not what to make of it, but afterwards they can and do, 1 John v. 18, 19. We know we are "born of God, free from the dominion of sin," of which he speaks, and that the whole world lies in wickedness. Before a man is born again, he sees no difference between him and other men, but now he doth; and hence it is frequent in scripture for saints to express their experience of their double estate, Tit. iii. 2, 3. and they are commanded to try themselves, and may not only see Christ out of them, but Christ in them except they be reprobates, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. and hence command to give thanks for this, Col. i. 12, 13. which commands being evangelical, have a power to all the elect.

3. It is so great that others cannot receive it when it is offered, they are so far from having it in them, or counterfeiting, or making this inward work, that they cannot receive it, no not when the Spirit itself comes to work it, John xiv. 17. "The Spirit of truth which the world cannot receive;" it doth receive prophetic gifts, and common graces; but there is a higher and more divine work which they cannot receive, Rom. viii. 7. "It is not subject, nor can be subject to the law of God," where the holiness of God appears.

4. It is so great that they cannot understand it what it is spiritually, only in fancy, 1 Cor. ii. 14. "neither can he know them;" and hence men lie gropping all their life for grace, and ask and have not, because they know not the thing they would have, John iv. 10. "If thou knewest thou would ask, and he would give." A beast cannot conceive what a life a man leads.

5. Now

5. Now follow the reasons why the Lord doth make this internal difference or shewing that there is this difference.

S E C T. II.

Reason 1. IN regard of the infinite love of the Father, which he bears to the meanest believer above the most glorious hypocrite that ever lived. It is an everlasting love, and it is like that love he bears towards his own Son, John xvii. 16. Now if the Lord's love be not common to both, neither is the work, or fruits of his love common in both, but a great difference there must be; for as it is with men, so it is with the Lord. There are three expressions of love. 1. Their looks. 2. Their promises of love. 3. Their works of love; so the Lord doth,

1. Create in his people glorious apprehensions of his blessed face appearing in the glass of the gospel, Rev. xxii. 4.

2. The Lord makes many promises of love unto his people, which go to the very heart to cheer them, Hos. ii. 14.

3. The Lord confines not his love to looks and words, though it is wonderful to have the least of them; but you may read his love in his works of love. Now those works peculiar to them, are first and chiefly the donation of Christ, for a man in redemption to a man in vocation: and then the peculiar fruits of this love exprest in peculiar operations upon the soul, and in the soul, which God's truth in the new covenant promises, and God's faithfulness executeth, Jer. xxxi. 33. and xxxii. 40. to take away the "stony heart," to write "laws in the heart," to "put fear into the heart;" these are the peculiar effects of this new covenant, and they are operations in a man, which only the elect feel and wonder at grace for, Ephes. ii. 4, 5. "According to his great love"

"love hath he quickened us together with him:" There is a kind of resurrection of a man's soul when it is brought home to Christ. Look as the bodies of the saints shall be different at the last day, so when God raiseth their souls from the dead here, there is a difference now.

Reason 2. In regard of the death and blood of the Lord Jesus, which was shed not only that he might be a God unto them, but that they might be a "peculiar people" unto him, Tit. ii. 14. "He gave himself for his people," not only to justify his people, but also to cleanse his church, Eph. v. 26, 27. for this has been God's great plot: first to perfect his people in their head; and then lest there should be a golden head, and feet and hands of iron and clay, and because the church is not found lovely, therefore the Lord makes it lovely by little and little here, until it "appear without spot or wrinkle" at the last day. Do you think, brethren, that Christ's blood was shed to work no more in his people than in hypocrites? was it only shed to take away guilt of sin from God's sight, and then to let a man wallow in the sins of his own heart? It is true there is a work of sanctification which hypocrites have, which Christ's blood purchases, for I believe all common mercy and patience comes by Christ's blood, and so all common gifts and graces; but yet, beloved, there is a vast difference, their wills were never changed, though their minds were much enlightened; hence they sinned wilfully. The Lord never was dear to them, hence secret despite grew up, that at last they committed the unpardonable sin, Hos. x. 26, 29.

Reason 3. Because those graces or qualifications, together with the operations of them which are in the faithful, are the same with Christ's, the same in kind and nature, John i. 16. "From his fulness we have received grace for grace;" hence we are said to "bear his image," and because it is but little at first, hence

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hence "from glory to glory," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Now the Lord Jesus had not only the Spirit which he had without measure, but also he had many divine qualities, habits, or graces, which it is blasphemy to think that they were hypocritical or common, which the faithful receive from his fulness, and wherein they are made in their measure like unto him: so the saints have not only the Spirit, but also those peculiar operations of it wrought in them by the Spirit, whereby they come to be made like unto the Lord Jesus: Hence as there was an infinite distance between the Lord Jesus, and the best hypocrite, so the likeness that they have of the Lord Jesus, makes a difference now. And look as there is a difference between a plant and a beast, a beast and a man, so there is a glorious life which saints have begun here in this life, which none have but themselves, 1 Pet. v. 10. They have the "first fruits," the which is meat and drink, which no man knows of that lies in hypocrisy and sins.

Reason 4. If there should be no difference, then these evils would follow: 1. This lays a foundation of contempt of grace, and of the beauty of holiness in the hearts and lives of God's people: for look as it is in the work of the Son in redemption, if Christ should have died as much for Judas as for Peter, and suspended the act of faith to apply this on the free will of either, then Judas had as much cause to thank Christ for his kindness as Peter: and Peter had no more cause of blessing Christ for his love in redeeming him than Judas; and what cold praises will he then give him: So if the Spirit of Christ should sanctify or call a saint no more than an hypocrite, then the one has no more cause to be thankful for the work of the Spirit than the other: and when a man comes to look upon the work of the Spirit, and the graces of it, there is cold water cast upon those; this is no more than what a hypocrite has. Christ has not only redeemed by price, but also by power,

from the power of Satan, sin, darkness, delusion, and not to be thankful for this, is not to be thankful for the redemption of Christ: Thou shalt never have it then that dost despise the Spirit of grace, whereby thou art but commonly sanctified.

2. Because this abolishes the use of all conditional promises made in the word: for you know they are made to some qualification or work of the Spirit in a man, some to mourning, poverty, faith, hunger, loathsomeness, &c. now, if there should be no difference between seeming works in hypocrites and these, then

1. The truth of the promises is destroyed; for the Lord saith, "They that hunger shall be satisfied." I will answer, hypocrites may hunger, and yet not be satisfied. 2. The use of these promises should be lost; for why should a man then cast his soul upon God's faithfulness in the promise, when it is but common love to him and hypocrites: If it be replied, the one has Christ, the other not. I answer, it is very true; but then I ask, Who is he a Christ to? It must needs be to a particular people described in the word by their peculiar qualities, flowing from their forms and subjects by which they are known? and now consider, Rev. xxii. 19. "Is God a God of the dead, and not of the living only?"

3. Because this makes the most holy men that ever lived deceivers of themselves and others; only look upon John, Christ's beloved disciple, and bosom companion, he had received the anointing to know him that is true, "and he knew he knew him," 1 John ii. 3. But how did he know that? he might be deceived (as it is strange to see what a melancholy fancy will do, and the effects of it; as honest men are reputed to have weak brains, and never saw the depths of the secrets of God.) What is his last proof? "because we know his commandments," i. e. we have them writ in our hearts, and keep them, though we cannot fulfil them, it makes us every way more holy: Christ doth not keep them
love,

only, but we through his grace keep them; thus he proves it by a work in him. Now thus I reply, if all works in the souls of saints be common to hypocrites, then John went upon false grounds, deceived himself, and all that heard him, and all the churches that ever were to this day.

S E C T. III.

Use 1. of Confut. TO the papists, who, in their writings, seek to shame the churches of Christ, saying, that they deny all 'inherent righteousness or 'graces,' making a man just by the righteousness of Christ, and in the mean while to remain like a carcase or ghost, or a painted sepulchre full of rottenness within. Three or four of these archers that have shot these arrows I have met with, whereby they wound the heart of profession, and keep the people in a professed enmity and opposition against the ways of God's grace: Now we do not only deny this, but we profess that the Lord doth not only out of the riches of his grace accept us in Christ, but out of the same love sends down the Spirit of grace, not only to make us civil and moral, or hypocritical, but that the Lord works thereby such a change as is not to be found in the most refined hypocrites breathing. And we profess, though our justification doth not consist in this, yet whoever hath not this is not justified (whatever he may imagine) in the sight of God. And the Lord grant, the churches of the Lord Jesus may never open the mouths of those blasphemers of his name, in denying all righteousness in ourselves at all; deny it to justify, deny it not altogether.

Use 2. of Confut. Of an old Arminian error; for they hold and maintain an 'inherent righteousness,' but that there is no difference between the graces of believers and hypocrites, only in their continuance, and that is by chance too, and doubtful, viz. if they hold on, and for this purpose cite many scriptures,

three passages especially, that of Ezek. xviii. 24. "If the righteous man forsake," &c. which is spoken of rotten Pharisaical hypocrites falling far short of what the saints have. And the parable of the seed, "They all sprang up:" where it is manifest the soil was naught, out of which they that fell away did grow. And Heb. x. 29. "Blood wherewith they were sanctified," which is meant of such as had some inward enlightening, and lasting, and external profession really, not in appearance only in them, yet not any saving and effectual work, but thus by making grace common they make it vile, and under a colour of making all men watchful, they destroy all faith in God's faithfulness and promise, especially until a man come to die. Divines have many strong arguments against them, and shew however there may be decays, and relapses, and winter-seasons of the saints, yet ever there remains in them the "seed of God," 1 John iii. 9. John iv. 14.

The main ground of this their conceit is double:

1. False observation, in beholding many fall off that were not flars, but snuffs, glorious professors for a time, and lest they should be mad without reason herein, they search the scriptures, and in four thousand years find but four or five that fall away, David, Solomon, Hymeneus, Alexander, and Demas, none of which, if examined, will serve their turn.

2. A great mistake of the work of grace, together with their own experience, for they conceiving grace to be but a mean thing, and not understanding it, because they never felt it in themselves; hence make no difference between one man and another, and hence maintain apostacy from grace. I hope I need not stir you up to abhor this conceit, considering what has been said. I grant, indeed, a man may fall away from grace, considering grace without Christ to keep it. But yet it is in itself such a living fountain, as in itself does not perish, though it may; and in respect of Christ, it cannot.

Obj.

Qbj. Did not Adam fall from all his grace?

Ans. Yes, because he had neither the covenant of grace, nor the Spirit of grace, nor power of grace to support and keep him; but it is God's covenant now to write his law, to put his fear in the heart, never to depart, and to give the Spirit of Christ, who is now risen from the dead. "Because I live, you shall live also," John xiv. 19. And "power to keep us," 1 Pet. i. 5. So that though it is Christ that keeps a man from falling, yet the truth is, he that does fall from grace, as though it was a common fading thing, or does fall from Christ, he never had Christ at all, John iv. 14. "The water that I shall give, shall be a spring of living water," not of dead graces, yet quickened by the Spirit, and helped continually. And it is kept till life of glory comes, where it is swallowed up in the ocean of perfection.

Use 3. Hence we see the difference between the graces of hypocrites and saints does not only lie in the efficient cause, viz. the Spirit of Christ barely considered in itself, for then there should be no difference at all; for there are not two Spirits, and the same Spirit that works in the faithful, the same Spirit is in the unfaithful, to work many strange works in them, 1 Cor. xii. 3, 4. Neither does supernatural power of the Spirit distinguish (I mean that which is above the strength of nature, not that which is above the use of nature; for nature crooks all God's works to itself) for the gifts of prophesy and common joy are above the strength of mere nature, but the difference lies in the work itself. As it is in creation, the least spear of grass has the same power to make it, that made heaven and angels; is there no difference then? Yes, it lies in the very work or effect of that power. And as it is in a cedar and a fly, there is more excellency in the former, in some respects, but the latter has another life, which the other has not; so the meanest believer is better than the most glorious hypocrite.

pocrite. And look as it was with Saul, when he was anointed king, there was a new spirit came upon him, the spirit of a king, which common subjects had not; so when God makes us kings and priests unto Christ, there comes another spirit upon us, which common men have not. I know there is the Spirit itself in the saints, as it is not in other men; But how is it there? I know it is there by faith, but not only by this, but by certain peculiar effects which are not in other men. As it is with the soul, it is in the body, hence works a life which is not in any brute creature; so it is here. And hence it is said, "The world cannot receive it," John xiv. 17. Mal. iii. 2, 3. "Who is able to bear his coming, because he comes to purify," &c. Yet still the Spirit barely considered in itself, puts no difference, unless it be in respect of the work itself. O therefore look to it, do not say, I have now the Spirit and Christ. But what does Christ work there? John xv. 1, 2. There are but two sorts of branches there, fruitless, and fruitful; the difference is in the very fruits of them, &c.

Use 4. O then terror to them that content themselves with common works, and so think their estates good. You have been terrified, confessed, and repented; Judas did so. You have reformed many things, and take delight to draw nigh to God in ordinances; those hypocrites did so, Ha. You have had great ravishments, and seen the glory of heaven, of saints, Balaam did so. You have beheld and seen the Lord Jesus, as if present on earth; many saw him, heard him, and were lifted up to heaven by him, and shall see him at last in glory indeed. O but my desires are good! Many shall seek, and not enter. O therefore consider of your estate, and tremble, and set before thee all the mercy the Lord embraceth his people with! and say, O that mercy for me! and follow him till he has done it.

S E C T. IV.

Use 5. **HENCE** it may appear that the true believer may know the blessedness of his estate, by the peculiarness of a work within him. For if indeed there should be no difference between those graces that be in hypocrites and in saints, if no difference between love, and faith, and desire in one, and that which is in another, then none could know the blessedness of their estates by any work; but seeing that the Lord has made a vast and a known difference, so that God knows it, and themselves know it, as has been proved, and all the world might know it, but that they want eyes to see mens hearts, and they shall know it at the last day to their eternal anguish, "when the hidden things of darkness," and the "secrets of all hearts shall be opened," then it must needs follow from the knowledge of such a work, a man may conclude his blessed and safe estate. By work, I mean, no popish good work, nor consider a work without a peculiar word of promise made thereunto. If we should ask a woman married to another husband, how she knows such a one is her husband, she would manifest it by those peculiar acts or works or manifestations of a husband to her. She has known he has forsaken great offers, and come to her: Her heart was most opposite, was at last overcome to forsake all, then they entered into a peculiar bond of covenant, so that they cannot part, and tho' they do depart, yet they stay not long. So here: If you should have asked the Israelites, how they did know they should be saved from the destroying angel? Why, the Lord has promised to save us. You that do what? That "sprinkle the door-posts with the blood." So the destroying angel of God's presence shall destroy millions of people, and that in the right-time, when they least suspect it. Notwithstanding
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all deliverances, miracles, plagues and repentances, shall you be preserved? Yes, the Lord has promised it, and revealed it. To whom? To them that have their door-posts sprinkled with Christ's blood, apprehended by the work of faith, Rom. iii. 24, 25. Heb. x. 22. If one should have asked the Lord Jesus himself, whom he loveth? he would, John x. answer, "his sheep," for, "for them he lays down his life;" be they feeble or strong. If one should ask further, who are his sheep? he would describe them by several properties, as he has done, John x. Such as "know me," as "hear me" only, as "follow me." So if you ask a believer that question, How do you know you are loved? It is good to answer with Christ, I am his sheep, for whom he has laid down his life, when I was lost and went astray. But how do you know that? Is he now to answer like Christ, by these properties wrought in me, or no? If you say, No, because all these an hypocrite may have, then the Lord Jesus has done very weakly in describing his own sheep, by such properties to be his, which discover them no more than so: It is true, an hypocrite has something like all these, but not these indeed. If you say, Yes, then a man may know his blessed estate by these. The promises, Prov. viii. 17. "I love them that love me." But how do you know you love the Lord? There is the question, If Satan and blind carnal reason ask this question, you will be filled with accusations, and never satisfy them; for he that accused Job to God's face, will much more to their own faces, accuse saints of hypocrisy. If uncharitable men that never had the love of Christ abiding in their hearts, you will never satisfy them; but if the Lord ask the question in his word, hold there, and the work is so clear, that though there has been much decay, yet after recovery, the soul dares eye the Son, and say, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee," John

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xxi. 17. Hence by this work you may come to know your safe estate.

1. A man may know his blessed estate in respect of time past, by a work, *i. e.* with a word or promise made to it, and the Spirit revealing of it, viz. the everlasting thoughts and election of God toward him, Rom. viii. 28. "Them that love God, who are called according to his purpose," notwithstanding all their miseries and sins; yet love him, and so "called according to his purpose," for so the apostle raises up his thoughts. I know the world is full of want of love, and think it easy so to do, and like the devil, are very kind to the Lord, as they think, while the Lord pleases them; who yet, when the time of patience is out, shall be eternal blasphemers of him. But there is such love whereby saints may raise up their hearts thus to see God's love, 1 Thes. i. 4, 5. "Knowing your election of God." How so? Immediately? Some divines think angels see it not so, and that it is peculiar to God so to do, but mediately; for our word came in power and in much assurance to make you enlarged for God, to turn you from idols unto God, and to wait for Christ in heaven, seeing him here but as in a glass. And by the same Spirit Paul saw it, by the same Spirit they might much more see it, and so the elect may see it. And if experience may be added to the truth, how many of God's people daily, knowing their work of vocation and glory, ascend from these lower stairs of the Lord's ladder, to the highest of election, and there are swallowed up with eternal wonderment, filling their hearts with that joy and peace, that the weak tabernacle of flesh and blood cannot bear the weight of that glory long; that by works see the promise, and by the promise of love, behold eternal thoughts of love: and hence promises are said to be given to saints, "before the world began:" Because promises to them that thirst, mourn, believe, &c. are not bare

words, but eternal counsels, in which you see God's purpose.

2. In respect of time present, by it we know our present union to the Lord Jesus, 1 John ii. 4. "He that saith I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar." Yes, that is true negatively, but may a man, ought a man to see or know his union positively by this? Ans. v. 5. Many said, they did know and love the Lord, but he that keeps his word, Oh they are sweet! It is heaven to cleave to him in every command, it is death to depart from any command. "Hereby we know that we are in him." If it were possible to ask of angels how they know they are not devils? they would answer, the Lord's will is ours: so here. How do you know you have not the nature of devils, and so in state of devils bound there till the judgment of the great day? Because God has changed our vile natures, and made our wills like unto his glorious will, &c. So for forgiveness, Luke vii. 47. "Much is forgiven her," &c.

3. In respect of the state of glory for time to come. We may know our blessed estate by a work, 1 Cor. ii. 9. "Eye has not seen what the Lord has prepared for them that love him." Psal. xxxi. 19. "Oh how great is thy goodness laid up for them that fear thee!" 2 Cor. v. 3. "If clothed with Christ," whole Christ, ver. 5, 6. "He has fitted us for this, and given the earnest of the Spirit," which, Rom. viii. 23. "are first-fruits of glory, therefore we are confident."

Obj. But if you look to yourselves, you will have peace to day and sorrow to-morrow.

Nay, we are always confident, and yet Paul did not now go on in a covenant of works. Now whether a man first comes to know his estate by a work, word, and spirit, so that there are three things to evidence our happy estate, or whether two things only, viz. a general word and spirit, I intend not to dispute,

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dispute, because it makes nothing against the truth in hand: Only this I say, it is very dangerous to "limit the Holy One of Israel," especially in his freedom of working, to breath light, and life, and divine consolation, when and by what means and promise, and in what measure he will. Christ when he was here on earth, would say sometimes, "Thy sins are forgiven," Matth. ix. 2. Sometimes, "be it unto thee as thou believest," Matth. ix. 28, 29. Nay, "be it unto thee as thou wilt," Matth. xv. 27. If in these inferior things, much more in greater. Christ is now gone, and we have no immediate speech with him, but in his word, and he is free to speak to his people according as he pleases, and when they need. And therefore let me entreat you brethren to be wary in your speeches in dashing all promises in pieces. What Christian heart can see God's truth mangled, without being angry and mourning for the hardness of mens' hearts? The Lord has spoken peace to some mens' hearts thus, he that is lost shall be found, "He that believes in me shall never hunger, and he that comes to me shall never thirst; and seeing this, they conclude, (the Lord's Spirit helping them, for sometimes they cannot do it) peace. For the major is the word, the minor experience, and the conclusion the Lord's Spirit's work quickening your spirits to it. Now say some, how do you know this? Thus you may be mistaken, for many have been deceived thus. Grant that, and shall a child not take bread when it is given him, though dogs snatch at it? What should one do then? Bring their work to the light, to the trial of the word, which you know does but two things.

1. Shews what God is. And
2. What man is, and so discovers and describes all hypocrisy of men, and all grace of men, now if it will not bear the trial of the word, convince them they have gone on in a covenant of works indeed:

But if it will, hold there, take heed then of false witness against the truth of God ; so that do not condemn the work of Christ in any man, where it is of the right stamp, and has Christ's image upon it, and so pluck men from their claim to Christ's love revealed in his promise. But learn to difference it once, and then I am persuaded the sad differences that begin to appear, would soon be ended among all them that love the truth in Christ Jesus, 2 Peter i. 4.

“ Whereby are given to us that have precious faith, “ exceeding great and precious promises.” The Lord gives little to his people, Oh but he gives them rich promises ! bonds and bills, and writings to shew for rich grace, and riches of glory, and riches of peace. Oh but these promises hypocrites may have ! they may be lost, and hunger and thirst, and believe.

What as those do that have their interest in these promises ? Why are they called “ precious promises ? ”

Precious promises are not common things. Precious promises are not the portion of a base world. Precious things God never gives to dogs ; and believe me, you may come to know the price of them in the times of your horror on death-bed, that account them common now. Oh but many rest on promises without Christ ! That is all one, the faithful by them come to partake of the divine nature of Christ, of his Spirit, of divine consolations, peace, grace, and this is not building on a work, or resting on a bare promise, when it carries you to Christ and the everlasting embraces of him. It is no matter what promise gives peace, so long as it lands us in Christ. And therefore a man may know his blessed estate by a work, only let me put in three cautions.

1. Take heed you do not in your judgment, or in your practice go about to move to Lord to love you by your works, though it be of his making. For all works are fruits, no causes of the Lord's love, for this is Popery indeed, and it is hypocrisy. Isa. lviii.

3, 4. "Why have we fasted, and prayed, and de-lighted to draw near unto God?" &c. but look upon the work and promise, and be the more vile in thine own eyes, that the Lord should promise, or do any thing for thee. So that when you feel any saving work, go not to God with expectation of any good in the name of that work, but in the name of that free grace and faithfulness of God, which has moved him to make such precious promises to such as those are that have it. "Hast thou not said, Solomon shall reign?" 1 Kings i. 13. So here.

2. Take heed you do not sit down contented with the work, and quiet yourselves with that, never looking to behold his face that gave it, that wrought it. The "poor blind man," John ix. had a mighty cure upon him, and some seed of faith; the Lord wrought the work, but hid himself: He wondered at the great change, was affected with his love, at last the Lord Jesus comes himself, "Dost thou believe? saith he, Lord who is he? I am he? then he worshiped him," ver. 36, 36, 37. So it is with the Lord in his way of working grace: Oh therefore long to see him here in his glass, and in glory, in his face fully! Truly there is no work of Christ that is right, but it carries the soul to long for more of it, and to be with him that has done it. Many Christians when they have the work, run away with it as a good sign, and look to the promise, Oh but long not, look not to behold the Lord! "Do ye thus requite the Lord, Oh ye foolish people and unwise?" Were it not enough that your sins make? but will you make works and promises also a partition wall between the Lord and your souls? I profess the Lord will fire such work about your ears, and dry up all your pits, that you may long for to drink out of the well of life itself. And it is a black mark of unbelief that shall keep thee from rest, Heb. iv. 3. 10, 11. Oh but when you long to see him, "Oh when

"when shall I appear before God!" Psal. lxxiii. 2, 3, 4. Then the Lord will fill thee. As leaden rings with a pearl, so promises and Christ put together (not divided) are exceeding precious.

3. Do not look to see the work or promise yours, nor receive any consolation from either, unless the Lord appear in both, John x. 16. "They shall hear my voice;" for so most men bring home human, not divine consolation from a work. But Oh fetch it from heaven! as in Peter's redemption, Acts xii. You reason, and others tell you, and yet you are full of fears and doubts; and thou criest, Lord persuade me, Lord persuade me; yea, hold you here, now you are where you ought to be. Do you think Christ is filled with grace and life for you, and not with consolation for you too? Only use means, and so look up to him.

S E C T. V.

OH therefore content not yourselves with any hopes your estate is right, until you find this difference; for the Lord speaks peace only to his people, and his people are differenced from all others. Hence how can you say peace is yours, till this be cleared up unto you?

I shall speak to two sorts of people.

1. Those that content themselves with any thing that may stop and quiet conscience, any slight work, any poor desires, any hedge faith, any moral performances, any groundless conjectures will serve their turn. And being full, they can hear all sermons, no wind will shake them, no searching, threatening truths concern them; they are all so good, that they think the Lord means not them. Well, I say no more to you but this, know it, that the time is coming that the Lord Jesus will try you, and examine you to the very bran; and will desery all thy paint, and open all

all thy lusts and thoughts; and thy nakedness, and shame, and confusion shall be seen of all the world.

2. Those that content themselves with the revelation of the Lord's love, without the sight of any work, or not looking to it. I desire the Lord to reveal himself abundantly more and more, to all that have the Lord savingly revealed unto them. For this is the misery, Christ is a hidden thing, and so is his love: Yet consider,

1. God reveals not his love to any hypocrite, but to his people, that have a work far beyond them.

2. That the testimony of the Spirit does not make a man a Christian, but only evidenceth it. As it is the nature of a witness, not to make a thing to be true, but to clear and evidence it. And therefore whether the Spirit in the first or second place clears God's love, I dispute not, because it is doubtful; yet be sure you find out the difference, viz. some work in you, that no hypocrite under heaven has: Else what peace can you have?

1. Hereby you come to prevent the strongest delusion that Satan has to keep men in bondage to himself, viz. to give men great peace, and sometimes great ravishment, while they are in their sins, that so he may harden them there still, Luke xi. 21. Now by taking this course, and going to Christ to untie the knots of Satan, you do now undermine the main plot of Satan, you break his head, having recourse to Christ to do this. His policy is, let your heart alone, let Christ alone with that. But now you may be sure all your consolation is of the right make.

2. Otherwise you quench the Spirit, and resist the testimony of the Spirit, at least one great part of it. For the Spirit when it does come to witness God's love, it answers all the doubts and objections of the soul that it had before. Now the great doubt of God's people is not only, Am I elected, am I justified and

and accepted : But am I called, am I sanctified, are not my desires, my faith, my love counterfeit ? which I may have, and yet go to hell ? Now the Spirit when it comes clears all doubts, not fully, but gradually ; for it is the most clearing witness, and therefore, John xiv. 18, 19, 20. “ At that day you shall know that “ I am in you, and you in me, and I in the Father.” The Spirit does not only say Christ is out of you, in heaven, preparing and interceding, but in you, sanctifying, preparing thee for glory, that art a vessel of glory ; “ and you in me” by faith, by love, desire, &c. Now when a man shall say, I look to no work, but only for the Spirit to reveal the Lord’s love ; in seeming to desire the Spirit, he doth resist the Spirit of God.

3. Otherwise you shall be deprived of all that abundant consolation which the word holds out before you. For suppose you say, I look not to the work of God in me, to receive any consolation from that, or any promise made to that, I look only to the revelation of the Spirit.

Ans. 1. There is never a promise but the Comforter is in it, and they are given for that end, to give strong consolation ; now if you look to no work, nor no conditional promise, nor to find the condition in you (which yet Christ must and doth work) Lord ! what abundance of sweet peace do you lose ? Rev. vii. 17. The Lamb leads them to the “ living fountain “ of waters, and God wipes away all tears :” And for ought I know you shall die for thirst that refuse to do it. “ O flow of heart to believe all that the scriptures have writ !” all that God has spoken ! Ought you not thus to be comforted ?

But 2. If you look to a Spirit without a work ; whilst you do seek consolation from the Spirit, you cannot avoid the condemnation of the word. You say the Spirit has spoken peace to you. But do you love Christ ? I look not to that, but to the Spirit.

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Why the word saith, "He that loves not him, let him be anathema." So, Is the league between your sins and your souls broken? *Ans.* I look not to that. Why John saith, "He that committeth sin is of the devil," 1 John iii. 8. 9. Are you new creatures? I look not to that. Why the word saith, "Unless you be born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And the Lord knows, but on your death-beds, thus Satan may assault you, and then will the Lord say, nay, look to yourself. The word shall be Belshazzar's terror. Consider, Psal. xxxii. i. 2.

4. Look to it else you shall be deprived of further manifestation and communion with the Lord Jesus. The Lord reveals not all of himself at once, the day dawns before the sun riseth, and there is a further manifestation of the Lord in this life to his people, not for, but when they indeed maintain such works before him, John xiv. 21. "I will manifest myself unto him." How? O saith Christ, "I'll come and sup with him." Never think the Lord will dishonour himself so far as to come into a filthy heart. Sin does and will grieve God's spirit, that he will only accuse, not speak peace to you, till all is mended.

5. Else you may fall everlastingly away, as those, Heb. x. 29. They had "received the knowledge of the truth, and were sanctified," but their wills and hearts never changed. O take heed there be left "only a fearful looking for of vengeance!" You stand on the brim of destruction every moment, that do it not. For it is plain hypocrisy not to bring works to the light; it is not ceasing to go on in a covenant of works, John iii. 20. And if the Lord does love you, and you will not take the counsel of the word, the fire of the Lord shall try you. And when that comes, and conscience shall ask, wherefore comes all this great evil upon me? when your miseries shall be great, O it shall be said, this was because

I loved not the Lord, I forsook the Lord, &c. O therefore look to the Lord now to cleanse you! Zech. xiii. 9.

Object. It is true there is a difference, but is it possible to know it, seeing that a false heart may go so far? especially to know it in itself?

Ans. It is true, it is difficult for men, ministers, or angels to reveal it, yet it is easy for the Lord Jesus to reveal it, and this he does do. This light discovers hidden things as they are, his "Spirit leads unto all truth." And this is a peculiar privilege and honour as for God to know, so they partaking of the divine nature, for them to know their own hearts, Jer. xvii. 9. And although it be an easy thing for hypocrites, that never knew what grace meant, to be mistaken, yet after the Lord has made it known to the elect, it is no easy matter to deceive them. As it is with apothecaries, that know when they meet with counterfeit drugs; or jewellers, that know the difference between Bristol-stones and pearls. As the blind man saith, whereas I was blind, now I see; for I was dead; now behold I live. "Old things are passed away, all things are become new." 1 Pet. ii. 9. They are "called out of darkness into marvellous light." If they could not a difference, why would the Lord command them to add one grace to another, and "grow in grace?" May they not well reply? Alas, Lord I know not trash from treasure. I know nothing thou hast commanded me to do, but hypocrites may have and do. I say therefore the work may be seen in itself, and that by a threefold light.

I. The light of the word, which is a divine revelation of or concerning God and man, and of man, not only as fallen in Adam (which discovers all his sins, their nature, their end, &c.) but as risen again and recovered in Christ, the birth, being, breeding of the new creature. It discovers all hypocrisy of the heart,

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so that they shall be forced to say, the Lord has found me out; and saints shall say, the Lord has done me good. As if the question be, whom doth the Lord Jesus love? You need not go to heaven for it, "the word is nigh thee." Those that love Christ: Who are those? "Those that keep his commandments," &c. So that the word is a light to discover truth from falsehood, the work of grace from the work of hypocrisy; and by this light saints may and do know what the work is. And it argues dreadful unbelief and hypocrisy not to do thus, John iii. 19, 20, 21. And this all the saints are commanded to do, 2 Pet. i. 19. "We (sealed with the Spirit) have a sure word of prophecy," &c. "Which is a light in a dark place; both to reveal God's heart and our hearts unto us; hence "it makes us wise to salvation."

II. The light of the Spirit going with the word, reveals the work; without which the work cannot be seen, no more than a book written in the fairest hand or print, can be seen without light to see it by: And hence God's people cannot presently read what the Lord has written, &c. 1 John iii. 24. That look as it is with scripture, papists say they are obscure, and how do we know them? We answer, there are divine characters of Majesty and glory stamp'd upon them, whereby we by the same Spirit that writ them, see them, and are persuaded of them; so here. Or as it is in the work of creation: How can any see God in it? We say, in the very workmanship appears his power and eternity, wisdom, goodness, &c. Now although atheists cannot see these, yet others do and can. So in the workmanship of the elect, it is so. It is the glass of God's peculiar mercy and love; now they that never had it, know it not, but the saints do, by the Spirit especially. Thus far we grant the Spirit's testimony, that it must reveal it.

III. The light of experience and sense : For saints have an experimental knowledge of the work of grace, by virtue of which they come to know it as certainly (as we dispute against the papists) as by feeling heat, we know fire is hot ; by tasting honey, we know it is sweet. Now this is diversly apparent to experience.

1. By meditation of the work, in comparing it with the rule ; for no dead creature can perform one spiritual living act of life, no not a good thought, though they may think of good things. Now the Lord has given to his people a most exact rule of life, hence by meditation they may see how far it agrees or disagrees with the rule, and judge of a living act by it ; and so of the God and Lord of life to be there. Hence " try yourselves, know you not Christ is in " you," &c. And hence I never knew yet a thinking christian deceived, and hence I fear all that make not this their trade, will be to seek, and so to begin again : O the Lord teacheth his people hidden mysteries by this.

2. By the operation and working of it ; for grace may be in the heart, and yet lying asleep, and raked up under the ashes, not seen, not felt, but in the operation of it, it may, which is peculiar as the form is. For how do we know we love or delight in any creature ? By the operation of love and delight. How did Christ manifest to the Pharisees that they were " of their father the devil ?" Why " his lusts they " would do." So how can any tell he knows the Lord, or loves the Lord, or believes in the Lord ! The operation discovers it, James ii. 22. And hence Gal. v. 6. " Faith which works by love." And though hypocrites act like them, yet there is a peculiar virtue in the one that is not in the other.

3. By their temptations and trials, Deut. viii. 2. " The Lord has led thee forty years to prove thee and " shew thee what was in thy heart." Rom. v. 4, 5.

" Tribulation

"Tribulation breeds experience, and that hope" or expectation of that which shall never make us ashamed. I will name no more. But look as we said to them that cried out against prayer without a book, we answer, Has a man dwelt in his own heart so many years, and not known his wants, to make him pray? Nor the Lord's work of mercy, to make him blefs, so here.

Object. 2. But if a man looks to his work, this will interrupt and break his peace.

Ans. 1. It may and doth break and interrupt a false peace; as many say, yet they trust in the Lord's mercy, O it is a presumptuous peace.

2. Neglect of this yields most unpeaceableness, even in them that are sincere. You have peace, and then break out into pride and passion again; then question all. The-Spirit will sigh, not sing in that bosom, Psal. xxxi. 1, 2, 3. Judg. xvi. 20. Neither can you avoid the condemnation of the word, though you maintain consolation from the Spirit, nor suspicion of hypocrisy.

3. This is the way to peace, 2 Pet. i. 7, 8, 9. Mat. xi. 29. 30. Christ's "yoke is easy" and yields peace, in life and after life too, Rev. xiv. 13. "Their works follow them." So that hereby comes double peace and rest.

1. From horror.

2. From sin, which is wonderful great.

Object. 3. But I look to Christ, I look to no work. If I have him, I have all.

Ans. True, First look to have him, to be comprehended by him, that so you may comprehend him. But because you look for all in him, will you look for nothing from him! Will you have Christ sit in heaven, and not look that he subdue your lusts by the work of his grace, and so sway in your hearts? You despise his kingdom then. Do you seek for pardon in the blood of Christ, and never look for the virtue and end of that blood

blood to wash you, and make you without spot, &c? You despise his Priest-hood and blood then. Do you look for Christ to do work for you, and you not to do Christ's work, and bring forth fruit to him? You despise his honour then, John xv. 8. If I were to discover a hypocrite, or a false heart, I would say, It is he that shall set up Christ, but loath his work. To have Christ, is sweet, as Capernaum; to follow Christ, is heavy, John xiv. 21, 23.

Object. 4. But if I have the witness of the Spirit, what need I have any other difference?

Ans. The witness of the Spirit makes not the first difference. For first a man is a believer and in Christ, and justified, called, sanctified, before the spirit does witness it; else the spirit should witness to an untruth and a lie. For unbelievers are under wrath. 2. If the Spirit does not witness this peculiar work to be in you, and clear it to you, tell me how you can escape the anguish of conscience and the terrors of hell in your hearts, unless conscience be seared and blinded? When the Lord shall set conscience to ask and say, I chuse none but whom I call, I call none but whom I justify, I justify none but whom I sanctify, and that not with a common, but a peculiar work; Is it so with you? If it be dark or doubtful, can you but think all your joys have been dreams, and your witness delusions? Therefore look unto this.

Object. 5. But if I should do this, I should look to find some cleanness in myself, whereas I am to see nothing but ungodliness: Goats are clean creatures.

Ans. 1. When you stand before Christ's judgment-seat to receive pardon, you are here to look upon all as unclean, and yourselves ungodly.

2. When you come to look upon your sanctification, you are to see it as it is, mixt with sin and corruption, and so cause of being abased as low as hell for what is done; yet that cleanness and truth there is, you

you must see too, Rom. vii. He felt "a law warring against the law of his mind," yet he felt another law too, which he made an evidence of his being in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. Giving all the glory of it to Christ. "Not I but Christ." And yet Paul was no goat. It is one thing to see grace in myself, another thing to look upon it as mine, to clear me withal. You are to see the Lord's work, and not appropriate it to yourself. And this let me say, if there be no more than ungodliness in thee, and thou seest no more, thou shalt never see God in heaven, Heb. xii. 14. Nor didst never see him yet, 1 John iii. 6, 8. O therefore look to a work!

1. If you do not, you have no peace. For the Lord's sake do it before fire try you, or you stand scorching before the tribunal of God.

2. The sweet of it will be great, as there is nothing more bitter than Christ's departing with his holy presence; so nothing so sweet as Christ's cleaving to thee in his holy presence. And truly sin was never bitter to that soul to which the work of the Lord Jesus was not sweet, though it is accounted by some almost Popery to speak so. To this all promises are made, 1 Tim. 4. 8. "Godliness hath them." It is true, they are made to Christ, *i. e.* to Christ mystical, 1 Cor. xii. 12. Yet to the head as the foundation and conveyer of all to the elect, Eph. i. 23. 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. If you despise work, you despise promises, and so despise Christ, and the Lord knows what use you may have of them before you die.

S E C T. VI.

Use 7. Of Exhort. TO the people of God in whom the Lord has made this great change, and made a difference between you and all the world. Take heed of denying your work, and this real apparent expression of the Lord's love. How many doubting drooping

ing spirits are there, that though others may see, and though themselves have felt the sensible expression of the Lord's love, yet oft come to this conclusion, or fear that the Lord did never yet good unto me? And dispute against it, and think that this an hypocrite may have, Isa. xlix. 14. There are two ways where by grace is despised.

1. By making common grace special.

2. By making special grace common. The elect are apt to do so before they are called, as Paul thought his innocent godliness gain; they are apt to do the latter when once in Christ. All this we may have, and yet to hell. Oh take heed of despising this kindness which the Lord Jesus has not shewn to the greatest potentates of the world.

Obj. Yea, if I did but know it; but I am put to such fears and doubts about it, that I know not what to make on it.

Ans. Do not think that thou art under the power of thy sin, when thou art at war with thy sin and it with thee. For the Lord many times clears up his love to the soul, and it is better than life to him, but then winds arise, and storms come, and sin and satan assaults, and now he cries out, he perishes, and that he was never redeemed by Christ, nor never saw Christ's love. Should his soul be thus ensnared, thus assaulted, and no strength against it, and therefore being under the power of it, hence he never had pardon; they cannot overcome their corruptions, though they strive against them, hence think they are under the power of them, and then say, where is Christ's Spirit? &c. *Ans.* When Rebekah had twins, so that she was troubled, she went to the Lord, who told her, "The elder shall serve the younger;" so there is flesh and saints in saints, and these two are contrary, so that you cannot do the things you would; and sometimes cannot will, yet sometimes opposeth this. Well, know it, that

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the elder and stronger shall serve the younger, it shall be Lord. A man that is at war with another, has received power against him, but victory is not gotten presently, so it is here; judgment shall come to victory. Though thou art bruised and canst not raise up thyself; now there is no fear of breaking, if God will not do that, none shall do it, and therefore thou shalt get victory. Only know for the present thou hast power. Thou goest to all ordinances, and when no help there, raisest the power of heaven. Oh Lord awake! "Awake Oh arm of the Lord!" *Isa. li. 9.*

22. Do not think that the being of grace is lost, when it is hid, by the cessation of it for a time from acts. For it is hard to know whether grace be there, when acts are not seen nor felt; now sometimes it is so; the heart is careless and negligent, ceaseth from acting, quencheth the flame of the Spirit. Hence come fears, was there ever grace here: the sluggard's garden is full of nettles, and he saith, was there ever good seed sown here? *Ans.* Consider, it is in this case, and it is in sin. Though the act of sin ceaseth, yet there is a bent of heart still toward it; and a carnal heart will return to his old bias and bent again: So though the act of grace ceaseth, yet there is an inner man, a gracious bent and frame put upon the will, that though for a time it ceaseth acting, yet it will return to its old bent again, to its own nature, which is called "the seed of God," *1 John iii. 9.* From which a man can never fall. For in sleep there is cessation from acts, yet the frame remains still. In the old law, if any unclean thing fell on a pitcher, it was accounted unclean, but if in a spring, not, because it would work it out again; so here: There is a spring of grace, which may be muddied and stopt up, yet it will work itself clear again. And this God's people shall find, there is something in them that springs up to everlasting life all their days.

3. Do not judge only of the truth and measure of grace by what thou hast in thy hand of feeling; but by what thou hast in thy hand of faith in the promise. God has ever delighted to keep his people short of what they would have, and to give them but little, inſomuch that they often queſtion the truth of grace, feeling ſo little meaſure of it. Yet, they look to the riches of God's grace, to the freeneſs and riches of the Lord's promiſe, and hang there, and plead that, and ſuck that breſt. *Anſ.* O now conſider thou art empty, but remember the Lord Jeſus is full, and the promiſe is free and full. O the riches of it, to give abundantly, and to work truth in thee! Hence it is there in the promiſe, and thy faith hangs on the promiſe for it. Why, it is thine by faith then. The nature of faith is to carry the ſoul empty to a promiſe and the Lord's grace, and Chriſt there, ſo that it knows not whither elſe to go for bread but here. Now faith doing thus, it makes the promiſe and all of it thine. 2 Peter i. 1. 4. Abraham had his child firſt in the promiſe, when he left a dry body, and ſaw a barren womb. And know it, it is infinite mercy to be kept up in the promiſe, and thou givest the Lord infinite glory by embracing of it now, and thou mayeſt triumph here. "Haſt not ſaid, Lord, that Solomon ſhall reign," and ſin ſhall not. It ſhall not. O rejoice O heavens and earth at this, for the Lord has viſited me! God took from Paul his revelations, and ſent diſtempers, that grace might be manifeſted in the promiſe.

4. Do not think that the Lord's heart is not towards thee, while he hides his from thee. For there may be frowns in a father's face, and yet love in his heart: the Lord purpoſely hide himſelf from his people ſometimes, eſpecially when they begin to grow weary of him, or proud, but yet his heart is towards them ſtill. Now they think not ſo, when in utter darkneſs, then they think there is no love. The

woman

woman of Canaan besought Christ oft, yet he heard not, yet his heart was towards her. How did that appear? Her heart and faith was still toward him, she would not leave him though she should have but crumbs. Isa. xxxv. 15. and viii. 17. And the Lord doth purposely hide his face in love, that his peoples' hearts may be towards him, Hos. v. 15. and vi. 7.

5. Do not judge of the Lord's love and heart toward you in these sad times by present feelings, but by the issue of them. For such is the Lord's carriage towards his people sometimes, that God seems wholly to cross them, and appears in all their ways with a drawn sword against them. He doth not only leave them to their enemies, as he did Sampson, but to their sins, and to satan to buffet them, that there is nothing but clouds of wrath and no star appearing. Now look to the issue, and "mark the upright man, his end is peace;" and consider this, Christ's kingdom is hid, and he brings contraries out of contraries, he makes darkness light, hell heaven, guilt pardon, weakness strength, and calls things that are not, as though they were. Then think within thyself, I will conclude nothing against myself, but stay and wait what the issue will be, which is ever glorious, James ii. 2, 3, 4. 1 Peter i. 5, 6, 7. Consider, has not the Lord done thee much good already? O consider what is then behind!

6. Never enter into dispute with satan, or thine own self, about thy estate, but taking and making scripture and word to be the judge of the controversy. Fears come in, you shall never have mercy, never have power; who told you so? Doth the word say that? The Lord never gave himself to me, I fear it! Doth the word say so? Never was any as I; doth the word say so? Or doth not the word say so, God delights to pick out the vilest, to send the physician to them that be sick. I cannot see nor conceive any mercy; doth

the word say so? Are not the Lord's thoughts above
 things? I have not that peace that others have, there-
 fore the Lord intends none toward me; doth the
 word say so? O but others if they knew me, would
 loath me! doth the word say so? When as it
 saith, Doubtless then thou art our father," Isa.
 lxiii. 16. And bring before this judge both sides,
 not only what sin can say, or may do against thee,
 but what the word of the Lord Jesus can say for thee,
 Jer. xxxi. 18. 20. Ephraim cries out of stubbornness:
 "O But is not Ephraim my only son?" Hear
 Ephraim lamenting too. And hear nothing against
 a word. Look on Paul warring against Christ, and
 yet the law of Christ in him also, Luke xxiv. 25.
 7. In times of greatest and smallest fears, remem-
 ber to be humble and vile in thine own eyes, worthy
 never to be beloved. And let the Lord have his
 will of thee, and this will give you peace: God de-
 nies mercy to that man that will be lord of it: To be
 sure, evidence mercy then he will not; and when he
 doth manifest it, it is then when poorest and vilest,
 and heart is meek and humble, Isa. lvii. 15, 16.
 Matth. xi. 29. O the Lord opens his heart and love,
 when once his will is dear. The Lord casts by his
 rod and frowns now; and creates peace. Thus you
 may come to see the work of the Lord's grace in
 you.

The ministers, to take heed of making precious
 things common, by giving in false signs and evi-
 dences of love, but look up to the Lord for a special
 Spirit here.

To God's poor people, and thankfulness. O that
 he hath called thee from darkness into marvellous
 light, into the kingdom of his dear son! O that
 when so many come near to mercy, and fall short of
 it; yet me to be let in! Caleb and Joshua to be let
 into Canaan, when they rest so near, and all perish!
 Bless the Lord for all afflictions, fears, temptations,
 enemies

enemies, evils, hidings of his face, hereby he has but tried thee and purged away thy dross; and be comforted against all reproaches of hypocrisy and apostacy, and a proud world that cast filth in the face of holiness. "Now we are sons of God, it appears not what we shall be, but we shall be like him in glory," in grace, in honour, in his kingdom; "for we shall see him as he is." And as for you that live, and lie, and bed it with your ease, lusts, loath, and God sends you means, but the bellows are burnt, the lead is melted, and your dross not consumed. "Reprobate silver shall men call you, and God shall destroy all your confidence." But you that are the Lord's, O that you would see what the Lord has done! he has put heaven into thy soul, and his work which is more glorious than the creation of heaven and earth.

C. H. A. P. XV. S. E. C. T. I.

Shewing that the hypocrisy of the heart proceeds from a want of saving illumination in the understanding.

THE spring or the great cause and original of evangelical truth and hypocrisy is the mind of man. For here there was an apparent difference between virgins in their practice and in their wills, as has been shewn; yet the Lord expresses it in general thus, that some of them were wise, (which is one part of the perfection of the understanding); and some of them were foolish (which is the great defect of light in the mind or understanding) because the truth of the one and the falsehood of the other, manifested what their hearts were, in their heads and minds; and

and the truth in the one, and hypocrisy in the other did arise and was maintained by wisdom in some of their minds, and by folly in the mind of some others. Folly or want of divine light made the one unready for Christ, wisdom or having of divine light, made the other prepared for him: not that it doth exclude the evil or change of the will and affections, but because they manifest themselves, and are maintained in the mind. Hence I say, one great reason or original of both lies in the mind. Matth. vi. 22, 23. "If thy eye be single, thy whole body is light," &c. The eye or mind of a man sits like a coach-man, and guides the head-strong affections; if now this be blind, there will be falls and deviations in crooked ways, John iii. 19. 20. "Light is come." Now what is the condemnation? "Men love darkness," i. e. will be blind, and having fore minds and hearts, will not look up to the sun. They see not, nor receive not the truth in love, and hence condemned, and *contra*. Hence Deut. xxix. 1, 2, 3, 4. Moses sets down the causes of all their evils: "The Lord has not given you eyes to see to this day." They did see and hear by natural and acquired knowledge, but not by a divine, created, infused knowledge, all that God had wrought and done for them. Hence when the Lord intends to seal down the Jews under unbelief, Isa. vi. 10. The Lord then said, "Shut their eyes lest they see, and so be converted." The heart makes the eyes blind, and the mind makes the heart fat. A man that is at enmity with God, the Lord sets him against himself. Hence men are left of God to their own lusts, Luke xix. 42. 44. "O that thou hadst known! and they knew not the day of visitation." Hence, Deut. xxxii. 29. "O that this people had been wise to consider their latter end!" You know it is in the Proverbs of Solomon the frequent title of those that are sincere and falsehearted, the one is called wise, and the other foolish;

foolish: infomuch, that some divines have made a necessity of a change and turning about of the will, when there is fulness and clearness of light in the mind: Else they say a man might be sapiens and yet impius too, which cannot be. But I dispute not about that; there be many brute creatures that imitate the knowledge of man, yet there is no mind of man or reasonable soul in them; so hypocrites may have excellent abilities of reason, and yet fall short of that new mind, the eye and director of the whole man, that the saints have. It is ever dark night with them, the sun of glory never did yet arise upon them.

SECTION II.

BECAUSE all divine light of glory is ever powerful through Christ to change the heart. Hence if hypocrites had it, their hearts would be sincere, which is not so, and hence they ever want it, what ever light else they have; and hence those that have it must be sincere, John viii. 32, "You shall know the truth, and it shall make you free;" from your bondage of fears and sins; hence David prays for light, Psalm exix. 33. 34. and then he shall be set at liberty. As iron is drawn to the load-stone by a secret hidden virtue, so there is a secret virtue of divine light that draws the most iron heart; nay, changes it, John xvii. 17. "Sanctify them through thy truth," &c. For this is the difference between God and man's teaching: and hence when the gospel comes in power, it comes in demonstration; whereby the heart is mightily overpowered, that it cannot but fall down before God, whose voice and truth it hears. And hence the young man saw some worth in Christ, but enough, and hence he forsook Christ. Truth is not stones, but bread to them that see it indeed.

Because the mind is the first inlet of all sin and

grace

grace, and hence all hypocrisy springs from thence. Hence when satan laid his train to blow up all the world by sin, he first enters into dispute and parly with Eve, and as the apostle speaks, deceived her, 1 Tim. ii. 14. "The woman was first deceived." And hence when satan came with his last and strongest temptation, to draw away the heart of Christ to him, he attempted it by a sudden presenting to his mind the glory of all the world, hoping hereby to get in. Nay, in the unpardonable sin there is *summa cecitas*, to call evil good; and good evil. And hence the Pharisees that did commit it, were called blind; and when sin is entered, it strengthens itself by the mind, Heb. iii. 13. "Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." As it is with cities, they might easily be taken, but for the forts that are built about them, and the soldiers that are in them: so men set up their hearts and minds above, and against the Lord Jesus. The power of sin lies in the power of darkness, as the power of a weak state in the wisdom of its counsel. And hence when the Spirit comes, all the work of it is expressed by conviction of sin, righteousness and judgment, because convince one effectually, and you convert him. And hence when the Lord comes with life, he comes in by light, Eph. v. 14. "Christ shall give thee light." And hence when the gospel comes to take away all darkness and sin, it is said, satan's chief policy lies in this, to blind mens' eyes, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Either by obscuring the light, or by kindling a false light in their minds, that they shall think they see, when their darkness remains; not but that there is filth enough in the will, but satan knows that Christ shines into the heart by the mind; and hence he blinds men, and then he knows he shall damn men. Beloved, if men had the Spirit, it would lead them into all truth, now this the world cannot receive, because John xiv. 17. "It knows
"him

"him not." This is that which opens and shuts to all life and sin; not that bare light can change the will, but the Lord doth it by the power of his truth and light: and as it is with water coming through some mines, there is a healing virtue in it, so light coming from everlasting love, it heals men of their evils.

S E C T. III.

Use 1. **HENCE** see the danger of two sorts of men especially.

I. Of those that fly from the light, which is done sundry ways. I will mention only one, that is used by a false heart. A man is troubled in mind concerning his estate, fears death and hell, and so few shall be saved, how can I be one, &c. How comes he to fear? The Lord has by his Spirit in the word discovered and found out his sin, the thief is taken and apprehended, and condemned, he hears still, but yet can find no peace. Why? Because he lives in those sins that he is convinced of. Hence the word raiseth damps and heart-qualms, that he has no peace, but is ever pulled from his own bottom and hypocrisy, and the word discovers more sins, and hence has no peace. The word will not give nor offer Christ and a base lust together, nor will not suffer any to have them both in peace. Hereupon the soul finding no rest nor peace (which the false heart seeks for chiefly) flies from the light, especially if it has found out a shorter cut to its peace, by any device or golden delusions of men. And now they will hear there no more, and now the publishers of God's truth are tyrannical tormentors of the consciences of them that be weak, false prophets, that lead them out of the way of peace. And because of this, they think they were led out of the way of truth, because out of the way of peace. Or if they

do come, they can sit with disdain and contempt of men (alas! they speak according to their light) and of all the truths of God, which shall one day be preached over again in flames of fire to their eternal horror. Rev. vi. 2. It is said, "Christ rides on a white horse, conquering and to conquer." Men have unruly hearts and strong hearts, and they will not die, not yield presently. And hence when one sin is cast away, another steps into the room of it; and when that is gone, another supplies the place of it, and commonly the strongest sin and temptation is the last. Now hence Christ goes on, rides on in the chariot of the word, conquering and to conquer still. Those that do yield, he saves; those that will not, he slays. Now these poor creatures have had Christ's arrows in them, and are wounded for some sin, but the Lord discovers more still; hence at last they fly away with the arrows in their hearts for ease. O poor creatures, know it, the Lord Jesus will find you out! You will not be conquered by him, you shall never be saved by him. You have light, you shall have delusions, endless unknown hypocrisy and darkness to be your portion. There is never a plain heart but he accounts that wound and trouble greatest mercy, and blest the Lord, that he will not give him his sins and peace with them too.

2. Those that fly not from the light of the truth, but give it the hearing, but yet let it slip; either not minding it then, or not pondering it afterwards; that before they come, thirst not for more light, look not up for it, nor are mourning when the Lord hides it from their eyes. Some there be that be such all-sufficient men, so good they need be no better, so wise that they need no more; some insufficient indeed to know, and hence ever learning, hearing, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth. If light breaks not in, they can lie in darkness still, and not mourn; and think no more of it than a tale that is told

told, or news that is brought. O look to your standing: for you are in the high road to hypocrisy, and it is impossible you should be kept from it that lie so, John xii. 35. "Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you." Satan knew if light came in, Christ would come in: And therefore know it, all that time thou hast heard and heard, but not with divine light, hast got only somewhat to prate on now, to be of another opinion now from what thou wast: O now Satan has been let loose, by the dreadful vengeance of Almighty God, to blind thee, that so thou mightst die in thy hypocrisy and sin. O poor captives, mourn under this, and behold your danger for time to come.

Use 2. Hence see the reason why many that have had mighty strong affections at first conversion, afterwards become dry, and wither, and consume, and pine, and die away, and now their hypocrisy is manifest, if not to all the world by open prophaneness, yet to the discerning eye of living christians, by a formal, barren, unfavoury, unfruitful heart and course, because they never had light to conviction as yet. You shall have some ignorant creatures awakened by some thundering ministry, weep and mourn for sin, and after vanish into smoke, being never convinced of sin. Land floods of sorrow without a spring of light, are dried up, and make the heart more fruitful in sin afterward. Many go under fears of wrath, and never get peace, because never convinced of wrath. Many are affected with Christ, and with joy of the gospel, as the stony ground, but they wanting depth of earth, of conviction, die away again; and hence all the the world can never stop a Christian in his shining profession, no more than they can the sun in his course, as Paul, 2 Cor. v. 11. "We knowing the terror of the Lord, persuade men." And hence Moses, Heb. xi. 27. feared no frowns of Pharaoh, cared for no honours from Pharaoh, he saw the God,
 R r 2 that

that was invisible; and hence Christ prays for his disciples, to be kept from evil. "The world has not known me, but these have known me," John xvii. When men are condemned to die, they take on because now they see death, but here in time of health they see it not. If men wrong a child their heart smites them and grieves, but the Lord is abased, dishonoured, and men are not affected, because they want light, and see it not: If men be to match with a prince or stand before him, it is counted blessedness; but before Christ, it is a burden because men know it not. It is strange to see some people carried with mighty affection against sin and hell, and after Christ. And what is hell you fear? A dreadful place. What is Christ? They scarce know so much as devils do, but that is all: O trust them not! Many have, and these will all away, to some lust, or opinion, or pride, or world; and the reason is, they never had light enough, John v. 35. "John was a burning and shining light, and they did joy in him for a season," yet as glorious as it was, they saw not Christ by it especially not with divine light. It is rare to see Christians full both of light and affection. And therefore consider of this, many a man has been well brought up, and is of a sweet, loving nature, mild, and gentle, and harmless, likes and loves the best things, and his meaning, and mind, and heart is good, and has more in heart than in shew, and so hopes all shall go well with him. I say, there may lie greatest hypocrisy under greatest affections; especially if they want light. You shall be hardened in your hypocrisy by them: I never liked violent affections and pangs, but only such as were dropt in by light; because those come from an external principle, and last not, but these do. Men are not affrighted by the light of the sun, though clearer than the lightning.

Use 3. Hence take heed of contenting yourselves with every kind of knowledge: Do not worship every

ry image in your own heads; especially you that fall short of truth or the knowledge of it; for when you have some, there may be yet that wanting which may make you sincere. There are many men of great knowledge, able to teach themselves and others too, and yet their hearts are unsound. How comes this to pass? Is it because they have so much light? No, but because they want much; and therefore content not yourselves with every knowledge. There is some knowledge which men have by the light of nature (which leaves them without excuse) from the book of creation, some by power of education, some by the light of the law, whereby men may know their sin and evils, some by the letter of the gospel, and so men may know much, and speak well, and so "in seeing" "see not;" some by the spirit, and may see much, so as to prophesy in Christ's name, and yet be bid depart, Mat vii. Now there is a light of glory, whereby the elect see things in another manner; to tell you how, they cannot, it is the beginning of light in heaven, and the same spirit that fills Christ, filling their minds, that they know by this anointing all things, which if ever you have, you must become babes and fools in your own eyes. God will never write his law in your minds, till all the scribblings of it are blotted out. Account all your knowledge loss for the gaining of this. It is sad to see many a man pleasing himself in his own dreaming delusions, yet the poor creature in seeing sees not, which is God's heavy curse upon men under greatest means, and which lays all waste and desolate, Isa. vi. "How long? Until all be waste," ver. 11.

Use 4. Hence see the right way of living a life of truth, of "being an Israelite in whom is no guile." Keep light in your minds, and you will keep truth alive in your hearts and lives. Many a sincere heart may have hypocrisy and much unsoundness in him, though he be no hypocrite. But how comes it so to be?

be? And whence so little truth? and hence so many fears and doubts about their estates continually? O! men lose that glorious light that sometimes they have. For when you have it in an ordinance, O how sweet is the Lord and all his ways to you! Afterward you have lost your hearts, truly it is because you have lost your light.

Two ways hypocrisy vents itself, which God's people oppose.

1. In secret withdrawing of the heart to sin. O now get light! for sin never draws away, but by appearance of some good at least, *pro hic & nunc*. James i. 14. Now put off the covering, keep the mind from being deceived, you will keep the heart from being hardened, deadened and withdrawn from God.

2. In performing duties, but not for Christ as their utmost end; now the heart is bent this way, yet it fails, because light is gone, to see and behold the glory and blessedness of this. Men that have honour or gain in their eye, are carried violently after it. Men that are bound for a voyage will go through, their eye leads them. Stephen speaks till the stones were about his ears, "I see Jesus," (saith he) "at the right hand of God." 2 Cor. xv. 58. "Be abundant in the Lord's work, knowing that your labour is not in vain." Hence David, Psal. cxix. begs for knowledge of this and that, and then he will do it. O therefore keep it in your minds as precious, Prov. ii. 10. "If knowledge be pleasant," &c. And pray to God to keep it for you. Light is in the sun, and not ceased to this day: so if the Lord would put in this light, and be the perpetual fountain thereof to you, it would abide, &c. "Thy word I have hid in my heart," &c. Psal. cxix.

SECT.

S E C T. IV.

HENCE learn the cure of hypocrisy, viz. remove the cause, which is folly, and if you would be sincere, O prize, and beg for more light, and love it, and you shall then after you have digged for it, find it. Would it not be sad to be led blindfold like them till they were in the midst of Samaria, so till in the midst of hell? Would it not be sad to be like Sodomites, groping for the door, especially you that are come over to this country for more of the knowledge of Christ. O then beloved, take heed you bury not your minds in the earth, lose not your thoughts in the dung. And you must stand one day before God, when the book of the secrets of your hearts shall be opened, when if found too light, then would it not be a doleful parting to lose the Lord Jesus after such light and affections, for want of a little more light? O look to yourselves now!

Means 1. Stick close to the guidance of the scriptures, and love them. Moses saith, "Then other nations shall say, what people so wise?" Deut. iv. 6. And these make "the men of God" (2 Tim. iii. 15.) full of God's Spirit, wise unto "salvation;" and for neglect of this, the Lord gave, and does give men up to strong delusions, that they believe lies, viz. "because they loved not the truth." Never a truth but is unsealed by blood, and revealed to be the infinite wisdom of the father, and love to poor lost men, where God opens all his heart; if men will despise these, it is a pity but they should be blinded. Do not scoff at those that know the Lord here, they are scripture-learned men, if not, never Spirit-learned. Take this for your counsellor, in all your doubts and fears it will teach you. A man gets an opinion, or falls in love with a sinful corruption, both deceive him. Why so? Is there no word
against

against it? O yes, but they will not hear it, but make God and scripture bow down to them, they will not be led by it. O intreat the Lord to keep thee from that.

Means 2. Be abundant in meditation daily, Psal. cxix. 99. It is a hundred to one else if not miserably deluded. And as the Spirit convinceth first of sin, righteousness and judgment, so let your thoughts be. This makes a man see far, and see much.

Means 3. Practice what you know, and taste the sweetness of it there, Psal. cxix. 100. And then the heart will grow savingly full of divine light. Nothing makes men foolish but this. "O taste and see!" O if men knew the sweet of this way of truth, they would ever walk in it, and bring others to submit to it! "Shall I hide from Abraham, that will teach his family?" Gen. xviii. 17, 19.

Means 4. Cast up your eyes to Christ glorified, being full of the Spirit for thee, and beg of him, as if he were with thee to send it down. As Solomon asked this. See John vii. 39.

Use 6. O learn to be exceeding thankful for any saving light the Lord has kindled in you, if ever it has been powerful to discover and remove the hidden hypocrisy of thy heart, that now the Lord has made thee plain and serious for him, that it is death not to live, heaven for to live unto him. O then bless the Lord for that means that did it for thee, thou mightest have perished in thy own delusions and dreams. Time was when thou wast deceived, now the Lord has made thy eyes brighter than the sun, to see such things as are hid from great ones in the world. O though it be but a little, yet if real and saving light, bless him. A man that has been in midst of sands, and without a pilot, afterwards looks back, and saith, there I might have split. O this is wonderful to him! O Christ did thus. "I thank thee thou hast hid," &c. Matth. xi. 25. The Lord has hid them from heads

heads and hearts of many wise and prudent, and ever they shall be hid, and *e contra*, revealed them to thee, a babe, a weak one, a poor ignorant one, Mat. xvi. 17. "flesh and blood has not revealed it," so as to build here on this righteousness, to bring all light and life from Christ, and cleave alone to him. O remember you are called "out of darkness into marvellous light to shew forth his virtues!" What canst thou desire more than eternal life? And this is it, 1 John v. 20. John xviii. 36.

CHAP. XVI. SECT. I.

That hypocrites discover themselves in an ineffectual use of the means of grace.

Secondly, the difference between the wise and foolish Virgins is set down more particularly, v. 3, 4.

THIS particular difference is declared by the different practice of the foolish and wise virgins each from other.

1. That the foolish, though they had so much wisdom (like the wise as to take lamps, yet so much folly was bound up in their heart, as that "they took no oil in their vessels for their lamps."

2. That the wise did not only light their lamps, but they did also fill their vessels with oil, that either their lamp might never go out, or if it did, it might be soon kindled again. More plainly, the foolish contented themselves with the name and blaze of outward profession, kindled from some inward, yet lighter and more superficial strokes of God's Spirit, neglecting the work within: but the wise did not only carry their lamps of outward profession, but they filled their vessels, and got an inward principle of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus to maintain their profession be-

fore men, and their uprightness before the Lord. So that methinks here is a double difference, the first is implied, the second plainly expressed.

1. That which is implied is this, that the foolish made choice of a good end, viz. to meet Christ, but it was with an ineffectual use of means to that end, their lamps were to light and lead them to Christ. These lights might blaze for a time, but they would consume without oil. They neglect that, the wise were better instructed than so.

2. The foolish glory in an outward profession, as also in some superficial affection, without an inward principle of the gracious presence of the eternal anointing and Spirit in them; but the wise have it, and are carried to glory by it. And more at this time of the lamps, and vessels I shall not speak.

Doct. 1. That the closest hypocrites of virgin-churches discover themselves (at least before the Lord) in an ineffectual use of those means that do conduce towards their desired and expected end.

The bridegroom is here looked for, the presence of Christ Jesus is longed for, he comes in the night, they must meet him in the night. Now means they use, lamps they take, and so much oil as kindles their lamps; but oil they take not in their vessels, the only means to preserve their lamps from going out, that so they may meet the Lord, and not be shut out from the Lord, as at last these careless virgins were. Search the churches for the present, search the records of past ages, many have desired and looked for the Lord, and yet have lost the Lord their end. Why so? They never had hearts effectually to use and improve the means to that end, either outward or inward. Look upon men out of the church, they perish because they have no remedy, they have no lamps to light, they have no bread to eat, no means to help. But why do those within the church perish? Is it because there is no remedy? No, but because they

do not use the remedy. Is it because they want means? No, but because they do not effectually improve means. Here they fall short, herein they discover themselves. Look but upon this next parable of the talents, ver. 25. One of them was cast off, and cast out. Why? Because he had no talent. No, but because he had no mind nor list to use his talent, he did not make his gain out of it to attain his end. All ordinances of God, and all that time we have under them are talents. Now wherein do hypocrites fail? There is a secret gain of ordinances which hypocrites regard not, and hence the best hypocrite lives in debt, and dies a beggar. For Prov. xvi. 17. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool, but no heart to use it?" Precious liberties, ordinances, that many have desired to see, and have not seen them. Why does the Lord betrust him with such as use them not? O he has them, but here is his wound, he has no heart to use them! Look throughout all the word, why have many set a great price on Christ, and yet have lost him? Because like hingling chapmen, they have had a desire to the commodity, but they have been loath to be at the cost to use the means for it. The gospel brings Christ and immortality to light, and this serpent is lifted up, this lamb slain before mens' eyes, and this bread put to mens' lips and mouths. Why are not all possessed of him, blessed in him? The Lord saith, "come, and the Spirit saith, come, and the bride saith, come;" Why the reason is, men will not use the means for him, Isa. lv. 2, 3, 4. Men will lay out their money, though it be for "that which is not bread," Jer. ii. 5, 6, 7, 8. "I brought them through pits into a pleasant land, to eat the good things thereof." And doubtless he brought not a herd of swine into Canaan, only to enjoy the outward blessings and swill of Canaan, but to enjoy the good of his temple, ordinances, &c. But where was their wound? "Neither priests nor people said, S s 2 " where

“where is the Lord?” *i. e.* Where is the Lord in these ways, that we can come at last to the full enjoyment of him by these? This they neglected. Me thinks it is with the best hypocrites as it was with divers merchants, they prize and desire the gain of merchandize, but to be at the trouble to prepare the ship, to put themselves upon hazards and dangers of the ship, to go and fetch the treasure that they prize, this they will never do. So many prize and desire earnestly the treasures of heaven, here is their end, but to be at the trouble of a heaven voyage to bring this treasure, to “pass through the valley of Baca, tears, temptations, the powers of darkness, the breaches, oppositions, and contradictions of a sinful, unbelieving heart, good and evil report, to pass from one depth and wave to another, this the best hypocrite fails in, and hence loses all at last. And this I conceive to be one of the great differences between the strong desires and esteems of hypocrites and saints.

S E C T. II.

Reason 1 IN regard of God; because this neglect is one of the great means by which he does execute his eternal rejection of men, and hence here they ever do fail. For first, the Lord has chosen some to life; the end.

2. He chuseth certain means to lead to this end.

3. He purposeth to carry all his elect by these means to that end; themselves cannot, hence the Lord doth. And hence ariseth the great peace and support of the saints, when they look upon the everlasting mountains of hindrances and impossibilites in their way, the Lord has undertaken to carry them through them, John xvii. 15. That when heart and strength fails, he will be heart and strength, and guide by his counsel, and bring to his glory. And hence as all the elect are to be certainly carried through

thro' all means to their end, and this is proper to them, so hence the best hypocrite being never appointed certainly to come to this end, ever fails in the use of means; there he is and shall be forsaken of God, and forsake God. Hence John vi. When many used the means, and followed Christ for a time, that they might have life, at last they forsook Christ and means to have him. Why? v. 65. Because "none can come to me, except it were given him of the Father." Hence look as certainly as the degree of reprobation shall stand, he having not appointed them, to the end; so he never carries them through all means to that end, and therefore here they do ever fail. As it is in a family, those that the lord of the family intends to give his estate unto, he keeps a strict eye upon them, keeps them under the government of the family; as for others, let them go where they will, and do what they will; so here, all that shall enjoy God, are put under the kingdom of the Son. Hence he is said to be given up: To others he will say, you love liberty, take it then.

Reason 2. Because the Lord and fellowship with him, is never indeed their last and utmost end, or their only end, but they have some other end of their own, and hence they are never carried strongly through all means to that end. For this is the nature of a man's last and utmost end; it carries a man without any stop toward it, and that with delight. As a man that has honour and preferment, and great hopes in his eye, that is reaching to the top of his aspiring thoughts, he will ride, and run, and flatter, and sin, &c. A man that has riches in his eye, he will rise early, and go to bed late, eat the bread of carefulness, and he never has enough. A man that is sick, and has health in his eye, takes his physic, observes his seasons, wastes his estate, for this is his end. Hence a hypocrite never making Christ his last end, but being ever "a double minded man," James i. and having

ing his own ends, and lusts, and self to attend upon, hence the bias draws him from following Christ effectually, but he must follow his own ends, and hence ever neglects the means that lead him thereunto, Matth. vi. 24. Look as it is with men that have two trades, or two shops, one is as much as ever they can follow or tend, they are forced at last to put off one, and they must neglect the one : So here.

3. In regard of that Spirit of sloath and slumber, which the Lord ever leaves the best hypocrite unto; which is the dearest lust and last enemy that the Lord destroys in all his, but never destroys in these. Which so mightily oppresseth all their senses, that they cannot use effectually all means to accomplish their ends. And hence a man desires the end, but has it not, Prov. xiii. 4. The Lord proposeth the most glorious end to his people, but it is through many difficulties that we must come to it. Now there being the Spirit of sloath within, and these difficulties without, a hypocrite sits down and rests under the shadow of this growing, spreading sin; and saith, it is hard, and because he cannot do so, he hopes it is but an infirmity, and God will accept of his desires, and here perisheth, Matth. vii. 14. "For straight is the gate that leads unto life, hence few there be that find it." Look as it was with the Israelites, Canaan they were bound for, they came at last to it, but when their spies had told them of the difficulties, they sank, only Calab and Joshua of that mighty ghost that had upright hearts here. Heavy things must descend though cast up; for their place is downward. Light things, cast them downward, yet they must up again, for their place is upwards; So it is here: sluggish hearts may be lift up by means, but they cannot hold it, their place is downward, here is their rest; so saints, *e contra*, like fire will consume all difficulties, their rest is upward.

SECT.

S E C T. III.

Use 1. **HENCE** we see one ground of many complaints that are in the mouths of many professors of the ways of God, that never find the sweet which is the end of their Christian course; that are ever complaining of wants, but never feel supplies; ever learning, never triumphing over their sins; ever wishing that they had the Lord, but never possessing the Lord. And hence have minds full of fears, and mouths full of complaints, and hence finding no sweet in their course, could be content but for shame, to throw by their profession. Why? where is the cause of this? Is heaven so barren and beggarly, that there are no jewels to be had there? Are the fields of God's ordinances so empty, that there is no treasure to be found there? O yes! there it is, but Christians are idle, there is the treasure, but they cannot beg, much less dig for it, Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6. If there be a treasure in the ground, and a man can find nothing, and so is ever complaining, the fault is in the man, he does not dig long enough, nor deep enough; so it is here: there is never an ordinance, but the Lord is in it; "he never said to the house of Jacob, seek his face in vain." Men pray, and if a few sighs will bring in relief, well and good, if not, they cast that shovel by, dig I cannot; they spend some time in laying sin to heart, but if I cannot presently feel the bitterness of it, I cannot help it, dig I cannot. A man can be content to hear the word, and to listen after it, but to stir up the soul to lay hold on the Lord, that their sleep forbids. Prov. xiii. 4. "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat." Why do you famish under means, is it because the Lord is unwilling or unable to relieve? No. John vi. 27. "You labour for the bread that perishes." Labour not for it, but for the other, and the Son of
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man will give it you, for he is sealed for that very end. You complain your hearts are always out of frame. Tell me, do you keep them with all diligence? Prov. iv. 23. With all your guard about? You complain you never get assurance. Do you use all diligence to make it sure? You complain you seek and find not. Do you seek him diligently? Heb. xi. 6. On this is the cause! "The Lord has given you the spirit of slumber." O lay not the fault on the Lord, but on thine own careless heart, and lament over it, and say, this has been the cause of all my complaints and woe. O I remember what the Lord by Jeremy speaks! "Go into the strong-holds; for the Lord has poured upon us the Spirit of deep sleep, and given us the waters of gall to drink." I confess the Lord's choicest servants have their complaints, their sighs and groans unutterable, they have their fears, temptations and tears; who more abundantly? Yet beloved, methinks it is with them as it is with passengers and travellers towards their home, that they see it twenty miles off sometime, when they be on the top of an hill, after they have gone a little farther, they come into a valley, and then they complain they have lost the sight of it, and cannot see it again scarce till they be upon it; yet they sit not down in their valley, but are going towards it. "They go from strength to strength," though they come tired thither; as Psal. lxxxiv. 7, 8. "They pass from strength to strength till they come to see God in Sion. They rest not in their complaints, but get on; and the star before them, the means that lead them to that end, make them (as Matth. ii. 10.) "rejoice with exceeding great joy." I confess they may for a time give way to their sloath, and sit in their valleys, and turn day into night, and sleep out almost the season of means; yet you shall ever find this, if ordinary means awaken them not, terrible flashings, and lightnings of wrath do; and in their afflictions

afflictions and terrors and wounds of conscience, Hof. v. 15. "They shall seek the Lord early." Ponder therefore of this cause, and in a time of sorrow they shall complain for something, viz. their sloth. This may be the greatest sin of some, they live in no sin, but complaint, thy complaints may be fruits of sloth in not using means, and this may be thy great sin.

Use 2. Hence learn it is not having of means in this place, nor coming hither for means, that will do you any good, or evidence your safe and good estate, but an effectual use and improvement of them; not only the use of outward, but inward means too. Men that have never so great a stock may die beggars, by not improving it, Deut. xxix. 3, 4.

1. Many seeing and beholding that sun which is set with them, to be risen here in these western parts, partly out of fear of persecution, partly by friends' persuasion and company, partly to enjoy God in ordinances, have taken their flight hither.

But 2. Being come, wish O that our eyes had never seen it! partly through plenty of means, despise and loath them, partly through multitude of coveting or vexing cares have no hearts to, or time to use them.

And yet 3. Are comforted in this, that they have them, though they see no God in them, taste little sweetness, receive little power from them, and hope to go to heaven at next remove, that have come so far for these, &c. I would to God it were so. But O consider,

1. If you improve them not, thy coming hither is but the discovery of thy hypocrisy to men and angels; for this is the stage wherein the most fine-spun hypocrisy and real sincerity shall act its part.

2. Nay thou art so far from being blessed in having them thus, that God's fiercest plagues shall here approach thy dwelling. The ark among the Philistines made the Lord plague the Philistines.

T t

3. Nay,

3. Nay this shall lay all desolate one day. They cried, "the temple of the Lord," Jer. vii. "Go to Shiloh." So I say, go to the Palatinate, go to Germany, France, go to the places whence you came, and "see what the Lord has done."

4. This shall be as to saints greatest joy, when they shall look back, and see all the difficulties they have passed over, that here and there hearts and help failed, and there I lingered, but the Lord was merciful, and pulled me out, and they shall wonder at that faithfulness and grace; so here: This will be terror and anguish, that I came so far, and had means, and took some pains, and was almost persuaded one time, almost confuted another, almost conquered and had yielded up all at another, but O my lump fell down to the dust again, and my soul forsook the pursuing of the Lord again? and this shall be the portion of hypocrites. You may neglect and wrap up your talents, but the Lord has a time to call you to an account what gain you make. Look therefore to it, it may be some of you have need to improve means, you despise them in one place, and hither you come for them, and poor hearts, eyes dim, hearts hard, consciences asleep, ears deaf, breath gone, life lost, God departed, and nothing left but a dead carcase. It may be some are sincere, and the work of God's Spirit is set back, your lamps are out, your watchful minds and tender hearts and earnest pursuit after the Lord is gone. O then consider what little cause you have to boast in means! Men that have no part in ships, look for no gain; but if you have any part in the blessing of ordinances, rest not without it.

Use 3. Hence see what need you have of a mighty and irresistible power of the Lord's grace and Spirit, to carry you to an end in your Christian course, if ever you come to life. For if hypocrisy discovers itself in an ineffectual use of means, then you will find all the powers of darkness resisting and seeking to surprize

surprize you here. That as it is with thieves, you shall not see nor find them lying in the city, it is in vain there to offer any violence, but in the way; so Satan cannot step unto the gates of heaven to keep you from thence, and hence all his power and policy lies in the way of means, to keep you from thence. And hence look upon the best man, how many hindrances to prayer sometimes, though he has tasted the sweet of it, he had rather die than pray. How soon are the thoughts turned from God, when we come to draw nigh to God, how unable to wake one hour? That if it were not the invincible strength of a God that did support them, 1 Pet. i. 5. they could never go on. Tell me, you poor creatures, that never were effectually carried to your end by means, do you not oft find checks for sin, desires against it, Christ and mercy weeping at your knees, melting over you, and your hearts almost perswaded? Do you not find a want of Christ, and grace, and Spirit, and promises, and you hope it will be better? Do you not find some movings towards the Lord, but yet withal do you not find a dead, sloathful heart slays you again? The veriest reprobate in the world may have as good an assurance of heaven as thou, there may be in hell, that once appeared better than thee. And who can mend this? long, long it has been thus. O then feel a need of the Lord's irresistible power! Thou indeed halt an end, but say, Lord thou must carry me like a lost sheep on thy shoulders to that end! "Seek the Lord" and his strength, seek his face evermore," in all means, at all times, but seek his strength then, Col. i. 29. "I labour thus, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily;" and so I strive. O see need of this! Many of you make work with your own hearts, and strive, and endeavour, and yet cannot stir. O look then for this mighty working, and feel a need of it!

S E C T. IV.

Use 4. Of Trial. **HENCE** judge what your states are this day before the Lord. I know and believe that you prize, pray for, long for the end, and if ever the Lord saves and pardons you, you shall have cause to bless him. You may do as has been said, but never find a heart given you by the invincible wrestlings of a God to use and improve all means to that end; and thus your practice in the habitual neglect of means is a clear and manifest witness, like the day against you, that you do not desire sincerely the end (as you think) in having so little respect to the means that conduce thereunto. Did you ever see that man that did indeed desire life, but he would use all means, wits, and friends, nay, cut off his limbs, to preserve it? But, however, put that name upon it, say, you do desire and prize the end, yet if the Lord leaves you, or you forsake the Lord in a neglect of means, that lead thereto, and that effectually; what you may be, and what the Lord may do, I know not, but to this day your estate is no better than a painted salvation and pictured hypocrisy before the Lord. That stone at which the closest hypocrites have stumbled, that rock on which the best hypocrite has been broken, thou art fallen upon, that enemy of sloth, which has carried kings (men that have worn the crown of profession in the world) miserable captives (notwithstanding their lamentable cries, Lord save us!) to hell, the same enemy has already bound thee up in chains, and what will become of thee, it is only known in his breast, that by the voice of his trumpet can awaken the dead, and break the bonds of sloth and death itself. But you will say, there are no virgins among us that neglect to take their oil, that so far forget themselves as to neglect the means, that are come so many thousand miles for means; there is

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not a day but some line is drawn, not a sermon, Sabbath, but some good got, or else they think themselves half undone, not a prayer but one step nearer to glory: the day is not long enough, and therefore the nights are spent in wrestlings with the angel; nay, in prevailing with God for themselves and churches, and blessing on both; Sabbaths are the day-breaks of heaven, the fellowship of saints better than to stand before kings, the fellowship of Christ in heaven so sweet, that in seeking of him men forget themselves, nay to eat their bread; that if the Lord should have let out the vineyard of ordinances to any husbandmen in the world, who could or would have taken more pains to dig it, to dress it, than we do. Beloved, those enlargements that are in any after the Lord, the Lord cherish and increase them, but I fear we may go five times about the tree before we see such loaden boughs. I am much mistaken if the best may not be discovered here, the fairest flowers in the field must wither, they cannot last, and the best affections that are but temporary, that have acted men mightily for a time in the use of means, must perish in the neglect of means at last. I shall not therefore meddle with profane or carnal gospellers, so much as with close deceivers of their own souls; and look as it is in all sores, you may know where the sore is by the lappings, so you may know a sluggard that neglects means by his shifts: For if you observe, no sin has so many shifts and colours for it as this; Saul, when he had not gone through with the Lord's work in slaying the Amalekites, what ado had Samuel to convince him? He tells a lie, lays the blame on the people, proclaims the good end and affection he had; so here: Thus it is with many, as, viz. *and death itself*. Those that live in a secret neglect of means, and yet hope to come to their end, because of their desires; we shall find the scripture gives us two sorts of desires.

desires. 1. Of the righteous. 2. Of the sluggard. 1. "The desires of the righteous," Prov. x. 24. "shall be granted," being breathings of God's eternal Spirit, not a sigh or groan unanswered. 2. Of the sluggard, Prov. xxi. 15. "The desire of the slothful kills him, for his hands refuse to labour;" the desires of the righteous are ever spurs to quicken them up in the use of means mightily; the desires of the sluggard bridle him up, they bind his hands, and fetter his feet that he cannot but neglect means: Some desires there be that arise from the need of a good, and here will not only be desires, but all means used, as in point of famine; some only from want of a good, and here a man usually contents himself with bare desires, never has a heart to use the means mightily for that end. Many a one is convinced his state is miserable, and fears it, and Balaam-like, sees the blessedness of the people of God, and knows he wants pardon, and life, and peace, and promises, and Christ, and desires it; O that I might die their death, O that I might live and drink that water, that I might thirst no more, O that my sins were pardoned, O that my heart was humbled. But what if the Lord grant them no peace nor pardon? Do they make earnest enquiry after the Lord Christ with restless pursuits and groans because they need it, is it worth that? O no, but yet they hope God will be so merciful as to accept their desires, and so they rest; and live and die in that rest; O poor creatures your desires kill you; as a man is undone with slothful servants that cannot earn their own, much less get their masters bread. And many in hell say, I had thought my desires would have carried me to glory, but now I see they have been slothful, and here I must perish and famish for ever; had I known of this, I would rather have wept out my eyes, and filled the world with my sorrowful complaints, my meditations of the Lord should have been at midnight; I would have

have deceived my eyes of sleep at night, and deprived myself of bread at day; and lost my limbs, had I but known that by contenting myself with these desires, I should have lost my life. Here many Christians are falsely bottomed, they are troubled about their estate, come to some or other and profess their desires are after Christ and grace, &c. And then comforted (as in sinking fits a man snatcheth at any flag or twig) with them desires, before they have followed the Lord in the use of all means to get the thing they desire. And here is the first beginning of the Lord's forsaking of them, and theirs of the Lord, and he is left alone only with his desires, that if any duty be neglected, desires comfort him; if grace resisted, desires quiet him; if sin keeping him captive, desires fill him; Luke xiii. 24. And so like a bird that lies in the nest, but its wings never grow, there it perisheth. I know saints may comfort themselves with desires before the things be given, because promised, but you shall see an endless reach in them in the use of all means, Phil. iii. 13. Others think their neglect of means to be but an infirmity, and that their desires will serve, and hence abuse that scripture, Rom. vii.

2. They that neglect the means and yet hope to come to their end, because of worldly clogs and incumbrances here; for this is the very spirit of many a man. If God keeps the house from being burnt, and family from being sick, it may be family prayer is neglected, if not that, yet secret is omitted; if not that, yet meditation; a man can get no head nor heart, nor time for it, if any good is got, it is lost again; Sabbaths spent, and no good gained; a man knows his soul lies waste and common without any fence or watch, and that he would not let his fields as he doth his heart, overgrown with cares and lusts and vain thought. Now many a man though he doth dislike this, yet lives in this. Why? Is this your home, are these things your portion? No, but yet thinks

thinks he may with a safe conscience continue thus, and God forgive him too ; why the family is great, children increase upon me, (and they are so busy and long a dressing on the Lord's day, that sermon is out before they come) and we are not called to book it all day as ministers can, and worldly employments are so many, and the best are entangled here ; and they think this is an excuse, Luke xiv. 18, 19. Nay many a one convinced of this, yet lives in this against the light of conviction, hoping that one day the stream of worldly occasions will be run by. I confess, as the Lord has given us his ordinances to seek him in, so he has appointed our callings to walk with him in : Adam in paradise must not be idle, but look to the garden ; and in this land those that will be good husbands for God (lest they discredit their profession by bringing themselves to a piece of bread) must be good husbands for themselves : But here is that which stings, when to worldly employments, men are servants, not lords of them, when men do not make their occasions bow down to them, and serve them, that they may serve and seek a God ; but they bow down their knees, nay basely their backs, under the feet of any mean employment, that must be followed with neglect of God. Do not say, who is not entangled here ? I tell you, if Christ's prayer can prevail some are not, John xvii. 15. "I pray not that thou wouldst take them out of the world, but keep them from the evil : " If blood can prevail it does, Gal. i. 4. O look to this ! it may be some of you do not only neglect the Lord, all dies again, O it is the world ! know your estates by this.

3. Those that depart from God in the neglect of means, because they find no good, and do not feel themselves a whit the better for them ; they neglect this trade, because they find it a gainless trade : For thus God executes his eternal rejection upon many a soul : As it is with Saul, it was one of the last vials

God

God poured out upon him, 1 Sam. xxviii. 5, 6, 15. saith he, "I am sore distressed, and the Lord answers me not by Urim nor Thummim, and therefore am I come to thee;" let a devil comfort me if God will not: So many a soul having committed some sin that lies glowing on the conscience, is sore troubled, and first it goes to the Lord, and the Lord answers not, there is silence in heaven, and all means, but the noise of fears within; now at last the soul does not forsake the Lord for, Satan plainly, but what means can comfort them that they seek for, and in time a man is weary of waiting at God's gates, and hence a form of duties, and prayers, and custom of devotion is kept to quiet the conscience; but they are not restless for the gain of them, for the Lord in them: they think it is in vain, to no profit, as those in Mal. iii. 14, to walk mournfully. Jonah was cast out of God's sight, yet through "the belly of a whale he would look toward the temple." So it is with the people of God, though they sometimes conclude thus, and think not to seek any more, yet their hearts have tasted the good, their faith believes there is that hid in the Lord in his temple, that it never saw yet, hence they look still. What made the man, Mat. xxv. hide his talent in the earth? I thought thou wast an hard master, and lookedst for so much gain, and I could not get it, and hence he hid his talent. Hence men keep the means, without use of the means, and some that have for a time been used to do so, keep it as their custom without making any such work of it, as to gain the end of the means.

4. Those that do neglect the Lord in means by an effectual pursuit of them, because of some slips and taste of some good in them; and so methinks it is in this case as it is in some countries, where if a man comes to their houses in the afternoon, and both have a mind to part, yet loth to part without shewing some kindness, and the other without tasting of it, they lay

their voiding napkin, and finding that refreshing there they are content to lose their supper. So it is here, a man comes weary to the Lord's house, to his ordinances, the Lord will not let him go without some expression of kindness, nor they depart willingly from the Lord without it, and hence the Lord gives them light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, peace out of trouble, a taste of his sweetness, after tastes of sin's bitterness, and then they take their leave; as they Heb. vi. 2, 3, 4, 5. And here the Lord leaves many a poor creature, Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4. they did see something, and taste something, and there they rested; O but the Lord gives them not eyes to see, &c. For no hypocrite living is fully emptied of his lusts, but has somewhat to fill him; but some emptiness he may have, hence may have some desires after the Lord, and hence it is not the fulness of God only that satisfies him, but some tastes of God's kindness, and small things do and must fill him; his lusts fill him in part, and something of God is wanting, and that some little matter doth make up. Hence when this is done, means is neglected fearfully, a man's heart is hardened and ignorant, a little light and sorrow stays him, as the stony ground, though there be a stone at bottom; a man is full of doubts, and a little hope which frees him from fears quiets him, hence he never conquers unbelief: A man has lived a loose course, a little resolution of heart stays him, though the heart will depart again, as those, Deut. v. 27, 29. The Lord has but little of their hearts, and the Lord shews them but little of his: And hence this is usual to see a false heart most diligent in seeking the Lord when he has been worst, and most careless when it is best. Hence many at first conversion sought the Lord earnestly, afterward affections and endeavours die, that now they are as good as the word can make them! Hence the Lord when in mercy he deals with men, keeps them long fasting till the time of extremity comes, and then he

he pours waters on the thirsty. Hence better for those never to have known, 2 Pet. ii. 21. and an hypocrite's last end is to satisfy himself, hence he has enough; a saint's is to satisfy Christ, hence he never has enough.

5. Those that do neglect the Lord under this colour of receiving Christ, they can do nothing themselves, and Christ must do all; and hence neglect the Lord secretly, and sometimes quarrel with the ministry privately, when pressed to a duty or to believe. Alas! what can a man do, when all the ministers in the world have preached their hearts out, at last they must bring us to Christ; what else should the apostle mean, Rom. iv. 5. "Not to him that worketh, but believeth is faith accounted for righteousness. I must not live, I must let Christ live," &c. And hence, say they, the cause of perishing is not men's wills, but God's, he elects not, he gives no heart; such hypocrites the Lord prophesies of, Mat viii. 21. "Many that say to me Lord, Lord," i. e. that advance the Lord Jesus, and live in neglect of all duties, and bring the Lord of glory not from his throne in heaven to hell, but which is worse debase him from his glory to sin; to be the cover of sin; and protector of it. Beloved, I know no surer sign of a vessel that God intends to break in pieces than this, to live in this neglect, 2 Tim. ii. 20. Nay it is an evidence there is no hope, no living hope, 1 John iii. 3. "He that has this hope purgeth himself as Christ is pure." Many it seems boasted of hope in Christ, so do saints, but he gives this note, he purgeth himself, he will not sluggishly put all on Christ. It is true, it is the mighty working of Christ that must conquer thy lusts, but must this put you to neglect striving, Col. i. 29. "I strive according to the working." And for my part, though I will not dispute the point at large, I believe, there is a constant assistance of the mighty power of the Lord Jesus in the souls of all the saints, 1

Peter i. 5. And hence 1 John iv. "Greater is he
 "that is in you, than in the world." The saints as
 they receive the Lord Jesus to rule them, that he a-
 lone may be lord and king not only in heaven, but in
 their hearts; so a false heart receives Christ, lastly
 for to ease him: sometime for to ease him of the bur-
 den of conscience; sometime to ease him of the Lord's
 word, the burden of his will; and hence some at last
 have complained, though hardly convinced of it, that
 they could be contented the Lord should act them;
 but their end was, that thereby they might be rid of
 their burden, and so eased by him. I have heard a
 question should be asked, What is the difference be-
 tween the working of God's Spirit and the saints?
 And that the answer was, 1. The one is by graces, the
 other immediately. 2. The Spirit is, when a man la-
 bours least: quite cros to the stream of truth: take
 heed how you understand these points aright, the depth
 of the most hellish villainy in the world lies under
 them. Wo to thee that canst paint such a Christ in
 thy head, and receive such a Christ into thy heart as
 must be a pander to your sloth; the Lord will revenge
 this wrong done to his glory with greater sorrows than
 ever any felt: To make Christ not only meat and
 drink to feed, but cloaths to cover your sloth.
 Why what can we do? what can we do? Why as
 the first Adam conveys not only guilt but power: So
 the second conveys both righteousness and strength;
 as Christ is now triumphing by his eternal Spirit, and
 his life is heavenly; so if you be in Christ, there is a
 Spirit of Christ, whereby a never-dying life is begot,
 that can and does conquer; though it be but a spark,
 Christ maintaining it, it shall come to victory. You
 are forsaken of Christ if you want this, or else take
 heed this colour make you not forsake him.

6. Those that neglect the means, and yet look for
 the end in hope of future time, and so neglect the
 present season. Thus it is with many a one; the day
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of life and health, and day of ordinances continues; and hence the sluggard cries; Prov. xxiv. 33. "Yet a little more slumber," I will have but a little while longer, &c. Hence when conscience checks, ministers warn, the Lord woos, the Spirit cries; a man puts off all with this, I hope it will be better: and hence it falls out with them as with those, Matth. xxiv. "The Lord comes in a time they look not for him;" and of this many on their death-beds have cried out. Think of this, ye convicted persons, that know it is miserable with you, before God stop your breath, you have nothing to plead for your neglect, but hope of time. Know it, God's present seasons are golden, one moment worth eternity; and now is the time, if you neglect his season, he will not regard yours. God is never found in your time, but in his time. O lay these things to heart! especially you that are grown weary of means, that faint in your way; God is not yet weary of continuing means, art thou weary of gaining by means? O consider this, you that have had many hopes, desires, purposes, but all blasted, your time and means neglected: Think on this, you that have had marvellous affections, but your spirits are gone; nothing can make you mend your pace, not all ministry and word, but you are clogged with means. Remember that, Isa. lxxv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. "For my people that have sought me," &c.

S E C T. V.

Use 5. **TO** all those that do effectually seek the Lord in the use of means. And for discovery thereof, consider:

1. If ever the Lord gave you a heart effectually to seek him in means, you will find mighty oppositions, temptations springing up one after another, &c. from within, from without, and the oppositions will make
you

you seek him the more. Hence Rom. xiii. 11, 12. he bids us "put off the works of darkness, and "put on the armour of light." When a man desires and lies in his sloth, he meets with little opposition or trouble of his own heart; but here it is otherwise, therefore put on armour. And I say, the soul is made hereby to seek the Lord the more, as the blind man, Mark x. 48. "Redeem the time, because the days are evil." As it is with mariners, they will not only use fair, but fide, and almost contrary winds to come near the shore they are bound for; let the Lord give any grace, O more of that mercy, as Moses, Deut. iii. 24. Let the Lord deny, yet the soul cries the more; let agonies come, Christ prays the more; let the will oppose, he will yield himself to the Lord to cross his own will, and deny himself; peace makes him love, and affliction makes him seek the Lord early. Hence because thou art troubled at the feeling of a slothful heart, that will make you seek for more help.

2. You will seek him with your whole heart, so that it is the Lord only that the heart is bound for, Psal. cxix. 2. Phil. iii. 12. The feeling of the Lord's power and eternal life, and that not only while means last, but when in want of, and banished from means: as David forgets his crown and kingdom, and faith, Psal. xxvii. 4. "One thing I have desired." Hence Hezekiah had a promise of life, and going to God's house when recovered, it was not life he minded so much as this, "What is the sign that "I shall go to the house of the Lord?" Hence saints, though they neglect sometimes, yet as a ship driven back by neglecting winds, or as a tradesman he is altogether for his gain, yet proves an ill husband sometimes, but when he has felt his losses he falls to his trade again: So here, like merchants seeking pearls, &c. Matth. xiii. 45. Let this comfort you though you find nothing, yet saints are a generation of

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of seekers, finding time is not come, yet certainly you shall come to your end at last. You have no lappings for the sores of your sloth, but opening them before the Lord; the Lord will heal and help in time.

Object. But I feel no good, hence I am afraid I seek not aright.

Ans. Gal. vi. 9. "You shall reap in due time," and Heb. xi. 13. All things were crosses to the promise, yet Abraham holds on still.

Object. But I find my spirit faint, and grow listless and weary.

Ans. When heart and strength fail, yet God does not. God will desert that you may know where your strength, and heart, and help lies.

Obj. But it is so great, I know no difference between mine and others neglect.

Ans. That is sad, yet as it is in all sins, falls into them do but undermine them the more. Peter denies Christ, as well as sleeps, yet he is the first that preacheth him. When a man's meat is so far from doing good, as that it does him hurt, he is dying; so that sin is dying, that sloth is dying, when food given to it, does kill it. David is ready to give up all, yet saith, "It is good for me to draw near to God," and there the heart will repose itself again.

S E C T. VI.

Use 6. Of Exhortation. **O** Be not slothful then, neglect no means, but use all means, get oil in your vessels, that you may get your desired end. Mariners that are bound for a voyage, when set out, will not be at rest till they are landed where they would be. It was one of the church's sorrowful complaints, Isa. lxiv. 7. "None that stirs up himself," &c.

Obj.

Obj. But I find many hindrances without me, many sins within me, I have sometime neither strength (nay, which is worse) nor yet heart to seek the Lord, though my wants are many, though my days decline; how shall I do?

Ans. 1. Find out that which clogs thy heart from seeking effectually, and causes that neglect, and that makes the Lord neglect thee in thy ineffectual seeking; else thou mayest seek and never find, and that is some lust, something that eases the heart which is not God. When the soul has not bread, it will with the prodigal then resolve for home; men could not live as they do, so many days without God, unless they did feed on somewhat else beside the Lord. Hence it is usual for men in means, to use means for a good, and out of means to resist that good, Isa. lviii. 1, 2. Zac. vii. 6. Men that would have their load drawn, must first take their wild horses out of it: so do with these lusts. If therefore not for your own, yet for the Lord's sake, who else will not be accounted worth the seeking, find out whatever contents you: necessity has no holidays, O you must have him!

2. Use means, but trust not to them, nor to any strength received to carry you along in this work: you will else neglect and fall from the Lord, and the Lord from you. It is said of Afa, 2. Chron. xvi. 12, 13. "Afa was diseased in his feet in his old age, yet he sought not to the Lord, but physicians:" So it is with many a diseased Christian, they seek not to the Lord, to cure their feet, but means, or themselves, hence he decays and dies. You have the stream of all temptations against you, it is not your own oars, but the Lord's wind that must carry you against it; look therefore to an Almighty Power in means to help you, plead God's covenant to put his fear into your hearts, that you may not depart from him, as he will not forsake you, 1 Cor. xv. 10. "Paul received not grace in vain, but labours abundantly; yet

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“not I, but grace.” There is little fear of drowning so long as we keep head above water, so long as we cleave to the Lord Jesus.

3. Love the presence of the Lord and his company. If there be any love between you, you will then find time, and nothing shall keep you from him, Jer. ii. 1, 2, 3. “I remember the love of thine espousals, when thou followed me in a wilderness through pits and deserts.” Remember he has been in heaven praying for thee, when thou hast been provoking of him; he has been blessing thee, when thou hast been abusing him; it may be he has let out his heart blood to make room for thee in his heart; it may be he intends through all eternity to express his dearest love to thee, and is he not worth your love? Love him, and you will be with him; love will be stronger than death, it will break all these bonds.

4. Set before you the greatness of the good you are to use all means to gain; why do men hunt after flesh-pots? The world is esteemed great; it is near us, and so for honour: now Christ and eternity are far off, and hence they seem little, and hence to seek them is not made a business of greatest weight and importance, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 18. “We faint not while we look to things that are eternal, Acts xxiv. 15, 16. There is not the vilest reprobate, but when he shall see the glory that shall be revealed, he shall stamp and tear his hair, and say, O, if I had known this I hope I should never have dreamed out my time so as I have done! We look on the picture of goodness in the volume of the creatures, which satisfy not; O never cease looking upward, till you see what you seek for in the greatness of it. Suppose a man should sleep all his life-time, and be in a dream, and in it have all the delights and glory of the world presented to him, at last the ground opens its mouth and swallows him up, and then he is awakened, Lord how will he cry? Truly Christ and grace and fellow-

ship with God are not thought of, fought for, are small things with men, but the world is great and this is your delight ; truly it is but your dream : what will your souls be when death opens its mouth ? what a sad thing is it to see men spin cobwebs that must be swept down ?

Motives 1. To those that never fought the Lord effectually to this day, nor to neglect his now : those that are like children born before their time, that have had some sorrow after the Lord, but comforted before it was deep enough ; have some desires, but eased with other things before they were satisfied with Christ himself ; that have run for a while, but are grown weary before they come half way home, and so sit down in the way ; like clocks set flow in the first hour of the day, run flow all the day after : So these set back and think they are set right too, run flow all their life after. That as he said of a covetous man, he had a strong desire for heaven if any would bear his charges thither : so these. And to you I speak, not that never fought, but that have been seeking ; yet effectually to use all means, this you never did.

1. Consider how far men have gone ? What means they have used ? yet have never found to this day, Luke xiii. 24. Strive, saith Christ. This I speak because men think they may neglect their seasons of earnest pursuit after grace, men may sit still, and put all care from themselves to God, and live in their sloth. O no, consider so many snares, so many by paths, so many deceits within, so many sins and lusts to subdue, all time and means is little enough : take heed of spending prodigally, and think Christ's grace will bear you out. O ! look upon the cries of a death-bed, to see some men that have been like famishing men that have wanted bread, and then have cried bread, bread, but could not eat it. O, saith Paul, " I beat down my body, lest in preaching to others
" myself become a cast-away." 2.

2. Consider how others have broken down the greatest difficulties, and are now in glory, as Rev. xii.

11. "They loved not their lives to the death." They have not only spent their time, lost their name, their comforts, but their blood, that have passed through waters, fires, bonds, imprisonments, and with Paul have not "accounted their lives dear, that they might finish their work." David was full of God; one would think sometimes he had enough, yet when he awakes, he is with God at mid-night, "his thoughts and reins instruct him; the law was his meditation day and night." You shall see him in the temple blessing God, on the throne advancing the Lord, on the dunghill, in banishment longing after him, when he sat among princes meditating; and was there here too much cost? might any of this ointment have been spared? Consider Christ himself, Heb. xii. 1, 2, 3. Cast off sloth, "Looking unto Jesus, who for the joy, despised the shame, endured the cross," and that not for himself, it may be for thee, that thou mightst not, now he is at the right-hand of God: so are the saints in heaven, and now rejoicing that ever they sought him, that they spent so much time on him.

3. Consider, there is a time of neglect of Christ, which when past, you shall never find him again, John viii. 3, 4. "Ye shall seek me, but never find me." You have had many diamond-days and seasons, and God gives you a space to repent, and faith, "My Spirit shall not always strive;" it may be some are but within that space, that the Lord is at the last cast with you.

4. Consider whatever your condition be, shake off your sloth, and set upon the means, the Lord will be found; do it in good earnest: this will be good news to you that think he will never, but be thy heart like steel, and hard, the Lord will break it, Heb. xi. 6. "He will be found of them that seek him diligently."

And the greater things thou seekest for, the more like to get them ; as one of the fathers thinks, that to pray with repetitions, is to pray for small things. " Open thy mouth wide, I will fill it ;" and it may be presently in a moment, when thou thinkest least of it, it may be at that time when thou findest most unwillingness and difficulty to seek, seek then and the Lord will be found. O this damps many a man in the use of means, he thinks the Lord will never help, and hence is tormented with this thought, and sits down and rests : If you would keep a labourer from work, or a traveller from walking, put thorns in their feet ; now the work is neglected, there is pricking stuff, he cannot follow on his business now : so it is here, Prov. xv. 19. Take heed therefore of sitting down with such thoughts as these ; it is strange thou shouldst be killed for every cut, and because wounded for sin to fall off from the Lord by unbelief too.

2. Motives to you that have followed the Lord, but now have begun to neglect him : for what cause I know not ; but I am sure the Lord has given you none ; yet a spirit of slumber and sloth is upon you, that you are not the men you were. It may be some for want of place, want of time, many occasions, many sorrows and temptations in this wilderness ; and hence no means sweet, no bed easy, your bones are broken. It may be a little time of neglect has emboldned you to a custom : It may be loose examples, the spirits of others flat, and thine is so too, whom God sent into church-fellowship to quicken them : it may be an ill husband is an hindrance, a bad wife, as Job's wife, or whatever it is, O that God would speak this day to you !

3. Consider thou art nearer to thy salvation than when thou didst first believe ; and then you thought no time, no pains too much, but all too little, Rom. xiii. 11, 12. Mariners near the shore, look out for rocks, Lord that I may not split now. Truly as it was with Christ, the longer he did live, the more sor-

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rows, so with you. God has carried you near salvation, O now being nearer, there are worse rocks, look about you now. Satan's last temptations are strongest. O give not in now! It may be not many days nor weeks hence thou shalt come to thy journey's-end: Awaken then out of sleep.

2. Consider how glad the Lord is of thy company, he has been so, and will be so again; thou canst not come in too late, 1 Sam. xii. 21. as poor and vile as thou art, Prov. viii. "His delight is with the sons of men." Witness mercies, witness afflictions, O then seek him! Witness desertions, then seek him; witness his sweet entertainment of thee, many a time when he has given thee meat that the world knows not of; witness so many hindrances which Satan lays in, who knows how cross it is to Christ, Jer. ii. 1, 2, 3. "I remember the love of thine espousals; when thou didst follow me;" especially when with most difficulty, when little strength within, when little hope without; yet I will not give over. He never forgets this. The Lord has never such sad days as when thou turnest thy back on him, and thou never so good, as when thou seekest him.

3. Consider thy gains, there shall not the least endeavour, desire, pursuit after the Lord, not the least word, prayer, thought, time spent, but an abundant recompense is in Christ's hands, 1 Cor. xv. 58. "Ever abounding, knowing that it shall not be in vain." A man that rows against the stream, a little neglect of rowing carries him down again. But O "be ever abounding in the Lord's work, for your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

4. Consider, if after admonition again and again, yet you nourish sloth, there is some heavy stroke near thee. Believe it, he will not alway bear with thy neglect. As nothing makes him more joyful than your company, so nothing cuts him more than your neglect: but though he save you from eternal misery, yet,

yet sometimes your greatest comfort is lost by this means, Matth. xxvi. 38, 40, 44, 45. First he stirs them up once and again, then leaves them, and comes again, and saith nothing, but the third time, "sleep on, the Son of man is betrayed." So your comfort, and Christ and his presence are betrayed. Some have had their husbands, wives, children, estates gone, but which is worst of all, the Lord betrayed, the comfort of their hearts gone, and hence horrors and fears surprize them.

III. Motives to us especially in this country.

1. God has put the price and wealth of the world, better than all gold and silver, into our hands, who are most unthankful, most unworthy, and will you come so far for means, and here neglect them? will you thus neglect the Lord? Like men in consumptions, they long for any thing, and when it comes, they cannot touch it. If it were night, you might fall to sleep, but the day approacheth. Shall God plant his vineyard, but you never come to eat the fruit of it?

2. Your temptations are greater here to neglect the Lord. Others are tried with the scorching sun, there is no sleeping there. God tries us with the shadow, sets us under the vines of ordinances; others are in storms, we in calms. "When thou eatest and art full," saith Moses, Deut. viii. 10, 11. O "forget not the Lord!" You lose in your estates, and now you are hungry after the same again. Satan, when Christ was hungry, assaults him. It was a thousand to one if he makes you not fair offers, and overcomes. Things that cost us much, we prize, and keep, and improve, if of any use. When we go twenty miles to a sacrament, O then it is precious! while under the bondage of oppressors, O liberty of conscience, and ordinances are precious? But when at liberty, we have liberty to have them, hence take liberty to neglect them.

3. Our enemies will be upon us. Who sees not (that observes the Lord's dealing) that some sorrows are toward, unless the Lord awaken, some sudden blasting blow. If any wind be stirring, men on the top of mountains will feel it. The Lord has set his mountain above all others, and it is folly to think to flee from the cross, unless we flee from Christ. It is part of the portion he doth owe us here, if he loves us. Yet seek the Lord, neglect no seasons to gain him, and you shall be hid, Zeph. ii. 2. Nay when worst times come, 2. Chron. xv. 3, 4, 5. when there is no peace, they that seek him shall find him.

I fear there is at this day as deep mischief plotting gainst New-England as ever the sun saw. Enemies, will first deal subtilly before cruelly, but subtilly that they may deal cruelly. When Pharaoh deals wisely, he means to kill. Yet the Lord shall be with us, as of late, has he not been seen in the midst of us for a refuge? Whatever any think, I believe never did the Lord stir up such prayers, faith, &c. amongst us.

1. O therefore seek the Lord still in private. If you find no good, find out the sin. Is not meditation neglected? Communion of saints not improved? Do not say, we can do nothing, and why are we prest to it? If you cannot, yet it is your duty, and you must be prest; and perish you shall if you seek not; or if you be called, there is some Spirit of the Lord in you that is mighty.

2. Being come hither for public helps, and means, and all ordinances, O do not betray your liberties! But lose your blood before you lose them, and the Lord in them. Bear the ark still on your shoulders, that the Lord may dwell with you. Hence,

1. If you would have the walls of magistracy be broken down (the means to preserve the church and means among you) if they make laws, deride them; if they execute laws, appeal from them.

2. Would you have confusion the mother of discord among the people? let every man once one day in the year turn magistrate, and out-face authority, and profess it is his liberty. Would you have rapines, thefts, injustice abound? let no man know his own, by removing the land-mark, and destroying properties.

3. Would you have God's ordinances in the purity of them removed? keep out the load of superstition, but yet for peace sake, suffer a few seeds to be sown among you.

4. Would you have all the messengers of the gospel at first reviled, at last massacred? profess they are no better than Scribes and Pharisees, persecuting Egyptians, enemies to the Lord Jesus, and the more devout the worse; as those that stirred up storms in Germany said, Christ had four great enemies; the Pope, Anabaptists, Martin Luther, but especially John Calvin.

5. Would you ruin the gospel? set not popery against it, but gospel against gospel, promises against promises, Christ against Christ, Spirit against Spirit, grace against grace, and then he is twice beaten, that falls by his own weapons.

6. Would you have oppressors set over you, to remove ordinances, to encrease your burdens? Maintain this principle then, that they will not assault us first by craft and subtilty, but openly and violently.

7. Would you have this state in time to degenerate into tyranny? take no care then for making laws. When they are made, would you have all authority turned to a meer vanity? Be gentle and open the door to all comers that may cut our throats in time; and if being come they do offend; threaten them and fine them, but use no sword against them. Your fathers of the country be not offended; this I speak not to disparage any, the practice speaks otherwise;

I only forewarn ; I hope the Lord has prepared better days and mercies for us ; I am sure he will, if what means we have we preserve, and what we preserve, we through grace shall improve.

CH A P. XVII. S E C T. I.

That the hearts and souls of believers are made as vessels, only for the reception of Christ his Spirit, and the graces thereof.

2. **T**HE inward principle, wherein lies the second difference which is plainly expressed.

We are now to inquire further concerning these vessels and the oil in them. Vessels were the place only of receiving and preserving the oil for the continual burning and shining of the lamps : So that though in some scriptures, by lamp is understood both the vessel and the lamp by a figure, yet in distinct phrase of speech, that is properly the lamp which burns and gives light, and that which contains the oil to nourish, this is the vessel : so that the vessels were not separate things from the lamp, as though the lamp was in one hand, and a vessel in another ; this was neither the custom, nor comeliness of that age to cumber themselves thus ; but the lamp (as it is in ours) was that part which was kindled and lighted, the vessel that which kept the oil to serve this end : and hence the folly of five of them appeared, that they would carry burning lamps with empty vessels, just as if a man should draw the wick through the oil that it may burn for a time, and provide no oil in the vessel to maintain the lamp ; however all comes to one (if they be separate) in respect of that, that I aim at.

Thus literally we see what the lamp, vessel, and oil is : now what is spiritually meant thereby.

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1. For the oil : what is that ? I intend not here to shew the fond and various apprehensions of popish writers, who understand by oil, alms, good works, a good intention, &c. But by oil, is meant the Spirit of Christ, and the graces of it, peculiar to all the elect ; and thus in scripture phrase, 1 John ii. 27. the Spirit is called “ the anointing ;” and the graces of the Spirit, Cant. i. 3. “ The smell of Christ’s “ ointments :” Harlots love him for the gifts he sends, but virgins for the grace he has. That oil which ran first on Aaron’s head, and runs down to his skirts is here meant. Now as Christ himself had not the Spirit without graces, nor these without the Spirit, but both ; so both these being in him as in the fountain, they are in us as in the vessels.

2. Christ being the fountain of all grace, and having the Spirit without measure, and therefore has enough to spare ; he cannot be meant by these vessels which had but their measure, and such a measure as that they had none to spare for the other. Therefore by vessels are meant principally the precious souls of the faithful, into which this golden oil was put, and therefore, 2 Cor. iv. 7. “ We have this treasure in “ earthen vessels.” And Rom. ix. 33. “ They are “ vessels of glory, prepared unto glory,” and so frequently ; so that herein the foolish fall short, for the foolish boasted of Christ out of them, but where was the Spirit and virtue of Christ in them ? And this is conceived to be the reason why the main difference is not made, by the want of the external principle, viz. Christ, but by want of the internal principle and work ; this they had not. 1. They had so much oil, *i. e.* lighter strokes of the Spirit, as kindled a profession, but they had not enough. 2. They had so much oil and light as continued their profession for a while, but it continued not long.

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Here therefore observe these four things :

Observation 1. That the precious souls of the faithful are vessels made only, or chiefly to receive and preserve the presence of the Spirit and the grace of Christ.

Observation 2. That within these vessels there is an inward principle of grace and life.

Observation 3. There is a certain measure, degree, plenitude or fulness of the Spirit of grace in the heart of the faithful, which the unsound, though most glorious professors of the gospel fall short of.

Observation 4. That the graces of the saints where-with their hearts by the Spirit are filled, are constant, and of an everlasting, and eternal nature.

These three last answer three questions. If any ask the difference between the virgins ; the foolish want, and the wise have an inward principle of the Spirit of life. If it be said, hypocrites have an inward work, yet this inward principle is such a fulness of Spirit which they ever fall short of, and this will make them known for the present. If again it be said, that many flourish gloriously for a time ; yet it is of an everlasting nature ; and this will manifest them one from another in time to come.

The first point therefore I will only touch on now.

S E C T. II.

Doct. 1. **T**HAT the precious souls and hearts of all the faithful are vessels made chiefly and only to receive and preserve the Spirit and grace of Christ, or the gracious presence of the Spirit of Christ : that as it is with the souls of the wicked, they are made only to hold satan, sin, and wrath, and so fitted for destruction ; so the souls of the saints are made and fitted only to receive and nourish the Spirit, grace, and love of Christ. That as it is with princes, the best

rooms are reserved only for them; their attendants may come in and out to serve them, but it is their room, their lodging. So here, the hearts of the faithful, and the best rooms, best affections of it, are only to entertain the Lord, and his graces and Spirit? yet other things may come in and out as attendants to him, to serve him, but the rooms themselves are only for his proper use, 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21. The church is God's house: now there are many vessels (many souls) some baser of wood and earth, some of honour; what are these? *Answer.* "If a man purge himself from these;" for no man is born with a next disposition to receive grace, as a vessel full of puddle water that must first be cast out; now when this is done, he is a vessel meet for his master's use, prepared, &c. The best vessels abide in the house, not for their own or servants use, but for the master's use only. And though the Spirit may withdraw for some time, and they be unable to do any good work, yet they are prepared for the Spirit, and so for every good work, and here is all the use of the vessel of honour. Hypocrites are vessels of pomp, and state, and ornament: O the brave church of Sardis! the profound judgments, deep heads, eminent Christians, but not vessels of honour, because not vessels of use only for their master, only to receive the eternal anointing of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. If you would know the certainty of this more fully, 1. Go and ask themselves, is it so or not? if they be of age, and know themselves, they will say, I am the Lord's only, Isa. xlv. 4, 5. "When they spring up as willows by the water-courses: one shall say, I am the Lord's." As an eminent light said, when dying, O Lord, I will be thine: ask the world whose they are? and to what use and purpose they serve? they will answer, they are none of ours; and therefore John xv. 19. "The world hates them." Ask the Lord himself, he will professes though many wants
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and weaknesſes in them; nay, though ſometimes they are weary and neglect him, fall and ſoil themſelves; yet, Iſai. xliii. 21. “ This people have I “ formed for myſelf.” Veſſels formed and fitted of God only for his glory.

Reason 1. Becauſe all the creatures in the world are theirs, and ſervants to them, and therefore they are for the Lord only, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. If the more we took care for, and ſet our hearts upon the creature, if the more we were converſant with it, the more we ſhould have, and the better we ſhould live: Or if they ſhould not ſerve us, unleſs we did firſt bow down our knees to worſhip them, and our backs to bear them; then ſeeing the world lives by catching, we might then diſrobe and diſthrone our ſouls, and care more for theſe things, and leſs for the Lord; love theſe things more, and the Lord leſs; but the Lord Jeſus having taken all care for his people, and bearing more love to them, and having more care of them than themſelves, and therefore having given all creatures in the heavens, ſea and dry land to ſerve them, they ought to be and are only for him, Hoſ. ii. 21, 23. When a man is the ſeed of God, and born for him, now all creatures ſerve him; hence, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. It is a prevailing motive with all the ſaints, we have a living God that gives us all things; all creatures being dead, and not able of themſelves to help us, therefore truſt not on theſe things, but him only, be not high-minded in theſe things; but magnify him only. We know how angry God was with Belſhazzar for prophaning the veſſels of the Lord’s houſe in making them quaffing bowls, and turning them to common uſe. When a man is brought to that miſery that he has none, nor knows of none to be a friend to take care or thought for him, none that loves him, then he ſhifts for himſelf and becomes a ſervant. But thoſe that know, as women that they have rich huſbands to live on, they take care, 1 Cor. vii. 34. how to

to please them: so here. What is the reason that men are mad for this world? Because they poor creatures have no friend, know no friend; but saints have him, and know him, John xvii. 2. The saints are given to Christ, Christ to them, and all the world put into Christ's hand for us, (for the creatures are not given to us immediately to our own dispose, and hence we have not much of this world) to what end? that so he might give eternal life begun here. This is the only gift, and last, and best, and worthy of himself, and this only we receive.

Reason 2. In regard of that blessed liberty all the faithful are brought into; for what is a Christian liberty? is it to serve men? No, 1 Cor. vii. 23. Therefore serve not yourselves: is it then to serve your own lust? No, Rom. vi. 22. "You are made free from sin, and servants unto God." Is it then to serve any creature out of yourselves? No, Gal. iv. 1. The world is yours already, 1 Cor. iii. 21. 22. given to you, bought for you, spend not therefore one groat more to purchase it, but keep those affections and hearts for the Lord; much less imprison not, and imbondage not yourselves for it. A Christian's liberty, which God crowns him with above all the princes of the world, is to be only for the Lord, which liberty all creatures groan to be in, Rom. viii. 21, 22. To be for God and a lust, for Christ and this world, it is a shameful bondage, and most lamentable, and you are not at liberty yet, if not only for the Lord. When the children of kings and peers, of princes shall be made to come at the call of their grooms and kitchen-boys, if ever they stood before the face of princes, they will count this a heavy thralldom and bondage: so if ever you stood before the God of the whole earth, you will account it an heavy bondage, to have an heart sometime for, and sometime not for the Lord. Is not this liberty? No, but to have a heart only determined to the Lord; as it is in angels, and
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in the man Christ Jesus. Verily look as the Lord leaves his people for a time to their liberty in sin, so that their hearts are determined only to sin, that they are fit only to receive the suggestions and pleasures of it, but fit to quench the Lord's Spirit: so the Lord Jesus making himself and grace more sweet than their lusts, their hearts are determined only for him, their vessels are only for his oil, Rom. vi. 19. The liberty of will that Arminians plead for is nothing but the hypocrisy of a false heart, whose heart being touched partly with God, and partly with the creature; hence is alway falling from one to the other, James i. "Double-minded men;" but the saints are determined unto one, and then made perfect in one.

Reason 3. In regard of the fulness and all-sufficiency of the Spirit of grace, which their hearts are made fit vessels to receive; and do receive; they finding enough there God reserves them, and they reserve themselves only for the receiving of this, John vi. 68. "Will you depart? Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of life;" and so the Spirit of life, that have quickened our hearts when dead, that do put fresh life to us when dying, that comfort our hearts when sorrowing. Here is the life, glory, the life of Christ, the life of God; other things do but dead our hearts, thou hast words of life, John iv. 14. "The water that I give shall," 1. Be that which shall quench all his thirst to other things; so that though a man wants them, yet his stomach is gone, which the damned shall find otherwise. 2. A well of water in him, ever near him; men have their accommodations far off, but this is in him. Your hearts within are troubled, perplexed, and behold this is in you. 3. Springing up, continually increasing; for to have a good thing, and not to be satisfied in our desires with it, what is it but a misery? Hence it springs up unto everlasting life, which is the fourth, viz. The continuance of it, this will be here till my mortality is swallowed

lowed up of life. Like a leaking ship that takes in water by little, and little, till at last it is swallowed up in the sea.

S E C T. III.

Use 1. **HENCE** we may see the reason why the Lord doth not abundantly reveal and communicate himself to the souls of many men. What is the matter? Is it because they find no want of his Spirit, and life, and grace, and peace, and glory? Yes they do, and hence express their wants to men, and complain of their wants to God. Is it for this, that Christ has not wherewithal? Yes, he has received the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34. and fountains alway run, though men seldom drink. What then? Is it because they bring not their hearts, hold not their vessels under the Lord's horn of oil? Yes that they do, but their vessels are naught, they are not only for him; they feel their want of grace and Christ, but not only of chiefly of this. Special grace shall never be poured into a common vessel, a common heart, that lies in common for God, and lust, and world too. The honour, peace, life, gain, of a God, are sweet and precious. "Lord ever give me that water to drink." But you have five husbands, and seek not this only: Hence, if the Lord denies you, you can be content, because you have something else to fill your vessels; if the Lord gives, you undervalue it, and grow worse; and the very rising of that common grace you have, is the beginning of your apostacy and setting-off from God. And hence, no wonder why you pray but never have, James i. 6, 7. you want, and crave, but never find; your vessel is naught, though the Lord is good. It is a black mark that thou art in bondage to the creature, and didst never know what the liberty, even the glorious liberty of a son means. And it is a most grievous bondage to be half unloosed, and yet to be

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be in bonds. And I assure you, if you knew the gift of God, if ever you tasted how sweet the Lord is; this is the only thing your souls will cry for: that when you come to ask, and the Lord saith, what would you have? O the spirit of life! O the anointing of my blessed head! And what else? It only; this is it my vessel is made to hold; I am not made for my lust, nor sins, nor world: I would I had a bigger vessel, a larger heart to receive thy grace only. I confess, a gracious heart may for a time be carried too violently after other things; and yet seek the Lord too, as Solomon, Eccl. ii. But after it knows Christ better, it is more reserved now for him, as Gen. xxxix. 3, 4, 5, 6. Joseph's master for a time kept things in his own hand; but when he saw the Lord was with Joseph, and that he was prosperous, and blessed, then he made him overseer, and he knew not, it is said, what he had, save only the bread that he did eat: So it is in our Joseph. As the poor woman that knew the Messiah, she leaves her vessel, her water-pot with him, and now would have all the city to come and see and believe in him, and depend on him only, trust to him only, &c. Dost therefore seek, and find not! Hast been long waiting, and feelest not? And thou wondrest at it! Others comforted, and I not! Search if this be not the cause; it may be thy heart is not set only for this, but on thy back, belly, lots, ease, what shall I eat, drink? &c. As some women, because God does not feed so liberally their sweet tooth, their licorish longings, build them cieled houses, measure their present condition according to their sinful humour; nothing can please them, neither husband, servants, ministers, nor God's ordinances. Is this a vessel for the Lord and his grace only? You must, you will have a longer coat than you can well wear; hold here. Never think to have one prayer answered: If this night thy day of misery should come, cry thou mayst, but no God to hear thee or

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help thee. O a little oil, now a little grace, now a little mercy, Lord now. O no, you have no vessel to hold it. But O bless the Lord you know it. Others it may be are not so full of these sores of impatiency: but you pray for God, and grace, and have it not. Why so? These are not the things that you are only set for. Why? Because you are content without them. I am not, you will say; but you are; for you do not lament daily after the Lord for these things only: that which only satisfies, that thy heart is not at rest till it find: I hope I may have help for all this: No faith James, think not so. O therefore bless the Lord. You know what hurts you; saints have hurts thus: but they purge themselves, and hence are blessed vessels still. When Moses was begging for Israel, "mine Angel," saith God, "shall go with you," I will not. No, thou only, "else let us die here," *Exod. xxxiii.* This prayer wins the field, and wears the garland. The evils of the churches are many, an hour of temptation is coming on; scandals are like to be great; the subtilties of enemies many. Now we pray, and yet these have come, and we fear they will come. O beloved, go to the Lord, and plead with him only for this; and when thou canst procure nothing for thyself, yet let it fare well with Sion: and this only I must have, *Psal xxvii. 4.* "One thing I have desired." You shall have it then, else not.

Use 2. See the great sin of those that lose their life, preserve not the Spirit when he comes to them in ordinances; you are vessels only made for the Lord, and will you lose that which he drops in? There is no others can receive him, *John xiv. 17.* and when he comes to you, do you thus requite him? &c.

CHAP.

C H A P. XVIII. S E C T. I.

That the Holy Spirit is in believers as the principle of their spiritual life and holiness.

Doct. 2. **T**HAT within these vessels, is an inward principle of life and grace. Or, the burning shining profession of all the faithful, it proceedeth from an inward principle of the Spirit of grace, by the means of which their lamp burns, and their profession shines.

For this I understand by oil in the vessel, the Spirit of Jesus, not out of us, but received in us; not coming only upon us, for so he may on foolish virgins, by Balaamitish ravishments, and hypocritical pangs, and land-flood affections; but abiding in us, and that not as it doth in hypocrites, but as it is in Christ Jesus, without measure, both Spirit and graces, so it abides in us in measure: in Him as the fountain, in us as the vessels, from whose fulness, we receive the same. So that by oil is not meant the external principle of all life, the Lord Jesus having Spirit and grace enough, but keeping our hearts empty of it; but the Lord Jesus in us, who is not in us but by his Spirit, even the Spirit of life, from whence all our actions spring, and from which oil our lamp burns. This therefore I say, the profession of the faithful, springs not from outward motives, or principles of motion, as the actions of hypocrites, sometimes sudden praise, sometimes gain, sometimes fears, sometimes fleshly hopes, sometimes sudden conceit and fancy, sometimes irruption, and rushings of the Spirit upon them, but there is a spring within, there is a life within; there is oil in the vessel to fill the lamp, and so hence it burns. Eph. ii. 1. "You hath he quickned, who were dead in sins," *i. e.* you were held as fast under the power of your sins, as a dead man

man is under the bonds of death : but now in the room of that death, there is the Spirit of life, and the life of the Spirit. Now life is an inward principle of motion, of any thing in its own place ; as the sun, and trees, and grass, and cattle. You may take a stone, or a mill-stone, or wheel, and move it, yet they have no life, because this is not from an inward principle : so hypocrites may be acted, and moved by the great power of the Spirit in an ordinance, yet not living, but dead still. John iv. 14. the water (which is the Spirit) “ is a spring of living water in him.” Cisterns may have water in them, but no spring that is running winter and summer. 1 John iii. 9. This is called the seed remaining in him : which is that new creation, new birth, which the verse itself expounds, so that he cannot sin ; it is, against his nature, now he cannot be a sin-maker. Balaam could not curse the people of God ; and many cannot do as others do. Why, is it, because they are born of God ? No, but from some other respects ; and hence, Matth. xiii. 21, the stony ground fell away, because they had not the root within. This is called the inner-man ; the good treasure of the heart, opposite to the evil treasure of the heart of a wicked man. Now, as an evil man acts not only from satan, the evil spirit ; but the inward power of lust ; so the saints, Matth. xii. 35. And here I intend not to shew what this inward principle is, particularly, for that I reserve to the two last points. Yet, lest any should stumble, let me speak to two sorts.

1. Know some of you, that there is not only external actings of the Spirit from whence we act, but a new nature in the saints.

2. Let others know, 1. That as before the Lord calls we are dead, so after we are alive this inward principle is not perfect here. Hence actions sometimes cease, and when they do not, yet are corrupted, a *laxa principia* act, but never err in their act, hence have need of pardon

pardon from and acceptance in the Lord Jesus. 2. That this is not in us as in Adam, who did not need to borrow life of another, but it stands in daily need of the Lord Jesus, and hence this inward principle acts, but it is by faith, the operations of which are the waggons to victual the camp continually, especially in time of need, and which is part of this inward principle; and hence, Peter 4. 5. "You are kept by power and faith," i. e. your souls, graces, lives are kept by the Spirit, but through faith in us "to salvation."

Let me therefore prove these three things to you for opening of this point.

1. That the Spirit of the Lord Jesus is in the souls of the faithful.

2. That there is a principle of created graces, or the life of the Spirit in them.

3. That from this principle of the Spirit dispensing himself by his graces, our lamp burns, our acts of profession spring and shine forth.

First, That the Spirit of Jesus is in the souls of the faithful, 1 John ii. 27. "the anointing teacheth you all things." Rom. viii. 12. "The Spirit that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead dwell in us." The manner of his being in us I intend not to meddle with, unless I saw more cause. I do believe the manner of his abiding in us, and his nearness to all the saints, when seen of us, may astonish our own spirits, and shall one day confound all the world; only know, as the martyr said, "he is come, he is come." The spirit of the world and satan is cast out, 1 Cor. ii. 12. and in room of them enters the Spirit of God.

Secondly, That the Spirit so is in the faithful, as that there is a principle of created graces in them, or an inward principle of life and grace. Not that these alone make this inward principle, but the Spirit in us working of them, working by them. And truly it is

is a sad thing if the proving of such a principle shall be an attributing too much to grace in us.

1. Therefore to deny this is to deny Christ to be our sanctification ; for beside the passive obedience of Christ, we are justified by his active obedience also, *i. e.* his inward conformity to the law, and his external obedience to the law. So that graces as they are in Christ become our justification ; and hence he is said to be “ our righteousness.” No man can stand before God but by perfect holiness, but by doing whatever the law requires, and continuing so to do ; this is not in us, this is in Christ ; this as it is in Christ is properly our righteousness or justification. Now what is our sanctification ? if not graces in Christ, then graces received from Christ Jesus, which is this inward principle I now speak of ; and therefore to deny this is no less than to deny Christ is our sanctification : but Paul saith, “ The Lord sanctify you in “ soul and body, and spirit,” 1 Thess. v. 23. And if it were so, a man may have a heart un sanctified and Christ too.

2. If there should not be those graces, then a Christian was not bound to add one grace to another, but then the apostle’s precept should be broken, 2 Peter i. 7, 8. and so a Christian could not grow in grace, for graces are perfect in Christ ; and the Spirit does not grow in grace, and the immediate operations of the Spirit increasing in us, are not properly graces, no more than the act of seeing is the eye, no more than giving goods to be burned is love.

3. Then we are not to pray for graces, if there be no such thing to be found in the hearts of saints ; but Psal. li. 10. David prays, “ create in me a clean heart ;” now if it be a thing created in me, it is not the spirit only in me, for that cannot be created. I doubt not but David had a clean heart, but he fell in part ; and therefore look as there needs a creating power

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power to make, so there is a creating power to restore us again to what is lost.

4. Then the saints have none of their sins mortified; for it is as with the eye, being made to see, if sight goes out, darkness comes in, and if that be subdued, sight is renewed: So the soul being made only for God, and to bear his image; blot out that darkness and sin comes in; cast out sin, the Lord and his image and graces come in. If therefore there be no graces in the saints, then no sin mortified: truly if so, then the end of Christ's coming, and dying is quite abolished, 1 John iii. 8. and Rom. vi. 2, 3.

5. Then the Lord should be false in his covenant, and break oath, and be forsworn; for, Jer. xxxi. 32. "I will write my law in their hearts." Luke i. 73,

74. So that if you will not believe man, yet believe God: and if you will not believe his word, yet his oath. O but many good Christians find no such thing. But is it so, as they find it indeed? Either then they are no Christians, or else the Lord is forsworn.

Thirdly, That by the inward principle of Spirit and graces, our lamp burns, and shines, our actions issue. The Spirit enables a man to know, and hence the act flows, he doth know the Lord. The Spirit enables inwardly for to love the Lord, and hence it doth love him. That as Christ saith, "A good tree brings forth good fruit," from an inward sap received from the root, and by abiding on the root; so here.

1. Those that are renewed to Adam's image in their measure, have according to that measure, power to act; or in those graces there is power to act, for he had power so to do. Every creature in the world had a law of nature to carry them to their end, and so were carried to it. But Adam had a law of divinity, whereby he being a cause by counsel, was enabled by God to carry himself towards his end. Now we are renewed to that image in part, Eph. iv.

24. I know there is difference between Adam's power to act, which had no faith, and ours that has. And do not think that this doth advance nature, and the power of man, no more than the execution of the promise of the covenant of grace, doth destroy grace, and advance nature. For the writing again the law in our hearts, is that which this covenant promiseth; nay, this doth honour the riches of grace: that a man being under the power of sin, and cannot get deliverance, the Lord should now give an humble conquering spirit: never a precious heart but will be thankful for it.

2. Because the graces in us, are received from the Lord Jesus, his fulness, John i. 16. Now, the graces in Christ are not dead, but living; are not weak, but powerful; the Spirit of grace is now triumphing in him, it is so in us only: it is in him in the highest degree, in us in a lower. And therein consists our likeness to Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And to deny this, is to deface the image of the Lord Jesus. Without Christ a Christian can do nothing: but how doth Christ do all by the Spirit without graces? (I speak not of conversion where it is without graces as causes). No truly, as he acts, so we act in part. Unless any will say, we have not received grace for grace; or are in no measure like the image of Christ.

3. If the first Adam has conveyed to all his members a power of corruption, then the second Adam also a power of godliness, contrary to that, 2 Tim. iii. 5. yet in measure still, so as the apostle saith, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth," 2 Cor. xiii. 8.

Quest. But what measure of power is it?

Ans. I know no man that can from any ground limit the measure of it. For it may be in some men in greater power, in some men in less, in the same man at one time in a greater measure, at another time less. If one ask of trees, what measure of fruit they

they can bring forth; we cannot tell, because sometime more, sometime less: and the same tree more one year than another, and more at one time of the year than another; for they have their winter season. Only this, whereas before conversion he is stark dead to act, now he is alive and is not dead. And if a man should after conversion be but in the next disposition to receive grace, then how could one Christian be more grown and stronger in grace in his inner man than another? I know not any to question this, only I speak it to cut off their carnal hopes, that think Christ is theirs, when they have nothing, can do nothing, and slightly say he must do all; I cannot. I tell you the saints can, they cannot but love the Lord, and choose the Lord, &c.

Obj. 1. But must not a Christian deny himself, and alway go to Christ for power to do, and so be humble, and empty?

Ans. 1. You must, because this is the means to live to Christ; but this does not argue you have no power at all. A man must pray for his "daily bread," much more for "daily grace;" but does this argue a man has no bread in his house? No, this is the means to have it continued and blest. Easily can the Lord take away bread, or the staff of bread. Graces extinguish not faith, but help it.

2. A Christian can do no duty perfectly, hence must repair to Christ to help him to do every duty better; hence though he must use that power he has, and do what he can, yet he must not content himself with what he has, but seek for more, and what a sweet life is this? What honour would here come in? God lets in a new light into my mind, now I may and must see his truth, I saw it yesterday, but I may and must go to Christ to do it better; I must not quench the spirit of prayer, but carry the key with me, and next day pray better. And thus the soul is thankful for what it has, and emptying itself notwithstanding.

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that, and daily then receiving from Christ. And I believe many Christians fail here: As in the body, meat feeds and strengthens life, so I cannot live without Christ.

Obj. 2. But does not this make a man trust to graces?

Ans. To act from them is not to trust to them, no more than for a diligent hand to trust to his diligence, when he acts diligently that so he may be rich.

Obj. 3. But does not this dishonour grace to do all by the power of it?

Ans. Then the saints in heaven that are made perfectly like Christ, and that love the Lord perfectly, should not honour grace by this means, whenas this is it that makes them honour it most of all. As David, Lord what am I, and my people, that we should offer willingly: so here.

S E C T. II.

Use 1. SEE hence what cause of thankfulness to all the people of God, that the Lord should make their souls the vessels (which he might easily and justly have dashed in pieces) to receive and preserve this eternal anointing; I do believe there is no man that knows the bitterness of sin, the plague of his own heart, but when he sees Christ is his, yet it makes him mourn that there should be so little suitableness between the Lord and him, so little likeness between his life and Christ's; what though the Lord love me, and yet my heart weary of him? what though the Lord bless me, and my heart abuse him? and hence this makes it thankful, Rom. vii.

24, 25. This is so far from dishonouring grace, as that the apostle makes this the matter of admiration of God's grace, Eph. ii. 3, 4. "God who is rich in mercy, when dead in sins has quickened us:" Not only

only quickened our head (for hence is cause of eternal praise), but us ; and hence he has us set up “ in heavenly places in him : ” This is the state of all men, they cannot do one spiritual act ; now that the Lord should help when all creatures left us, is wonderful ; but that it should be with such a life, even the life of Christ Jesus himself ; for the same Spirit that raised him from the dead dwells in us, 1 Pet. v.

1. This is mercy indeed ; that he should not only die for us, and live in heaven for us, but that he should love so dearly as to come and live in us, that when our sins had slain him, he should not only come and dwell in our houses, nor only lay his head in our bosom, but live in our hearts, where he finds such poor welcome, and ill entertainment at our hands. I tell you this is wonderful, to make his habitation in us, that before we go to live with him, he should live in us : let them that never knew what this meant refuse to be thankful, but if you find it so, forget not this love, John xiv. 17. “ I will send the Spirit whom the world cannot receive, because it knows him not. ” The Lord sends the Spirit in common graces, and the world does receive that also in prophetic and miraculous gifts, and it does receive that ; but this Spirit which God pours on the thirsty, this Spirit with which God fills the empty, they cannot receive this. O that you should have it, whenas they know it not.

Hence therefore take heed of not owning the Spirit in this his presence. Do you thus requite the Lord, O unthankful world ! not so much as to own the presence of such a friend, neither in yourselves, nor yet in others. How like the world is it to think that there is no such thing.

2. Take heed therefore of not esteeming highly of it. If ever God broke thy heart, thou wilt esteem this life, this principle as the greatest piece of love ; and say, Lord, I shall account this as the greatest part

of love in the world, Psal. cxix. 68. "Thou art good, O teach me thy statutes:" Now to undervalue this, and to account it common, and hence as no sign of love, it is a part of unthankfulness.

3. Take heed of imprisoning the Spirit of grace, common truth, Rom. i. 18. It was fearful to imprison and silence that; much more this. It was the complaint of the church in those days, "None stirs up himself," Isai. lxiv. 7. What strength the Lord gives, let me use; what I want, the Lord has enough to help me withal; put it to exercise, or else affliction will.

4. Take heed of weakning and enfeebling this principle, the church of Sardis things were ready to die in it, you should strengthen this inner man, not weaken it, either by not feeding it with Christ, or wounding it with known sins against Christ. Therefore let all the churches know this, and take heed that you do not refuse to own this; where else will you make the difference between men, that either churches may discern them, or you may discern them, and so have peace yourselves.

Hence see the reason of that inward hypocrisy that is in mens' hearts, so that the best profession of many a man is but a scheme, an image, a very craft, a very artificial form; all the duties are fair without, but sapless, lifeless within: here is the reason, they have no inward principle of life, or if they do go to Christ, they have no such principle within them, to carry them to him, so as to receive life from him; and hence confess sin without sorrow or shame, petition without thirsting, live without love, do without life, because there is no spring, but a dry heart within; and hence they must do duty, but they must make dead work of it, and hence all is but an appearance, and at best but a would be. This is in a great measure in saints when the spirit within is quenched,

ed, but it is in full age and strength in hypocritical hearts, Jer iv. 14. when the profession of Judah was great, and the prophets had scarce any thing to say against them for outside, "O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness," there thy wo lies, it enters to the very heart; so Christ, "How can he that is evil, bring forth good fruit." And this is that which may make men mourn, If I forsake all profession, I shame myself before men; if not, I must blaspheme the Lord's name, and play the hypocrite before the Lord, Matth. xii. 33, 34, 35.

S E C T. III.

Use 3. **T**O take heed of denying the grace of God, or this inward principle, in whole, or in part, for this inward principle, being the life of Christ in us to deny this is to deny Christ, and to take away his life: and such the Lord will deny before his angels another day: when they shall say, "Have we not eat and drank in thy presence, he shall answer, I never knew you:" I shall therefore direct my speech to four sorts:

First, To those that deny created graces in the saints peculiar to them only, it is said there are none such in the country; if there are not, it may be there have been, and it may be will be, and therefore I will speak: for I believe it is a delusion digged and hatched out of the steam of the lowest sink of hell: and therefore that all may take heed of the evil of it, I will first shew the evil of it, then the causes that do beget it.

I. The evils of this delusion are these,

1. It settles and fastens a man under the power of all his sin, and yet with a quiet conscience, and yet to keep his Christ too. It transcends my capacity from whatever I have read, or have heard, or have felt, or can imagine how the power of sin can be taken away,

away, but where the Spirit infuseth the contrary grace; an empty house swept and garnished with common gifts, is but a fitting house for satan to return into: say therefore a man may have no such graces, and yet have Christ, and them in Christ, you stake this man down under his sin, and make this member of satan, a member of Christ Jesus. And upon this ground all churches in the land may be forced in conscience to take in all profane members, if they plead Christ, and their allness in him.

2. This blurs all the glory of a Christian, or at least the greatest part of it: for what is the glory of a saint? It is to be like Jesus Christ the Lord of glory, to bear his image before God and men. As to see a man with a swine's face would be the shame of a man; to see a Christian with satan's image, is the shame of a Christian; but to be like our head, this is our glory, though it be in sufferings, 2 Cor. iii. 18. heavenly, humble, compassionate, holy, as he was; and hence, when God has a mind to make churches or Christians base in the eyes of the world, he will withdraw here; and when he intends to draw the world after him, he will glorify it with his glory, Isai. lx. 6. 7.

3. It cuts off a Christian from all hope of glory; how many be there that scramble and catch at Christ, and every one saith, he is mine; the proud man saith, he is mine, and hopes now verily to be saved, but that hope is in vain; they have Christ out of them, but where is Christ in them? The life of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ? Col. i. 27. "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

4. Give me but one place in all the book of God, where blessedness is bestowed upon, or conveyed unto any, or promised, but to such as have these graces, "Blessed is he that feareth the Lord, and greatly delighteth," &c. Psal. cxii. 1, 2. If there be no such thing, let any man expect it if he can.

II. The causes.

1. A magnifying Christ, and making him our sanctification, whenas you heard the last day, this is to deny him to be our sanctification: He becomes our righteousness by imputation of his holiness, and our sanctification by infusing of it. Nay, hence a man deprives himself of all good in the Lord Jesus, when a man denies all grace in himself, and then flies for sanctuary unto Jesus Christ, 1 John i. 6, 7. "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie," &c. And hence it seems they denied men to have sin, ver. 8. boasting of fellowship with Christ, ver. 6.

2. Because there are (say men) only immediate actings of the Spirit. If this be so, then there is seeing in a Christian without an eye, and hearing without an ear, and knowing Christ without an understanding, and loving without love, and living without life, and feeding and eating without a mouth; and then when these actings are over, a Christian is like another man, there is no law remains written on his heart, and so Christ should enter into his saints, like Satan into the serpent, who only acts the serpent, and when that is done, he remains a serpent again. Know it, the Lord Jesus his greatest work is not only to change the acts, but to change the heart, not only to put new actions, but a new nature into men.

3. Because men know not the Spirit, never felt the presence, nor power, nor comfort of it themselves; and hence men do as some countries, because themselves are black, they paint the devil white, John xiv. 17. "The world cannot receive, because it knows him not." Give me any Christian living that ever found the sweetness of it, but his longings were to have more of that grace, to "forget things behind, and reach to things before, even to the resurrection of the dead," whom I believe none will say want all habits of grace: I look upon the opinion as coming

ing with a curse from God; A man hath been a dry professor long, conscience saith, there is no grace in the heart, and hence is troubled; true, saith he, there is none in saints, it is in Christ, and there he catcheth and deceives himself.

Secondly, Those that do acknowledge them, but any power or activity in them they deny; they say there is oil indeed in the vessel, but it helps not, it is no means to make the lamp to burn or shine; there is the life of Christ, but it is a dead life, they call them the graces of Christ, but they are but fruitless graces. I confess it, if you consider them without the Spirit of Christ, they are no true graces, much less active or living ones; but consider them thus, they have a power, as take the least grain of corn, there is a growing power in it, and fructifying too in it by dying first, though it actually doth not fructify presently, and though there must be rain, and sun must shine also, and a providence accompanying of it, so it is in the graces of saints: And hence it is called a "law of the mind," there is a power of a law, as of sin; and hence as Christ grew in wisdom and stature, so all the members of Christ are like unto him.

I. The evil of this.

1. This abates of the excellency of grace, as from a jewel to take away the operative virtue of it. For it is not like Christ's now, which is strong through God, not weak; which is living, not dead. This is not like the glorious graces of saints triumphing. This makes the graces of saints of less excellency than common graces: common grace will make a man ride over many a sin, and run exceeding fast, though he fall at last. A man that hath been angry, it will make him very quiet and still, and is there no more power in this?

2. This will make a man content himself with a bare form, with a false confidence if this be true. For take a man that hath been long seeking to get strength against

against a vile heart, and he finds none; there is no power of heavenliness, he is earthy; no meekness, he is proud; I would say to him, do you ever think to get any power of meekness, love, faith, &c. You shall never do it, never have it here; all your strength is immediately from Christ, look for it there; in conscience a man must cease there. And it is certain all our strength is in, and from the Lord; but it is dispensed mediately, Eph. iii. 16. Paul prays "he may be strengthened with might in the inner man." Or thus, a man may not pray for strength of grace, which Paul refused not.

3. Then the saints if they be asked whether they believe or can love the Lord Jesus; their answer must be, no I have no power to love, nor believe, and then Peter did ill to answer so, "Lord thou knowest that I love thee." Then Paul to say, "We can do nothing but for the truth." Then that martyr that to them that said, "the Lord strengthen you:" yes, saith he, the Lord doth. I know if the Lord withdraw his Spirit, we are gone, as Adam; but is there not the immutable assistance of it? Is there not the promise, "I will never leave thee," though sometimes weaker, sometimes stronger?

4. This will make a Christian hide and not improve his talents; he has grace, but no power to put it forth. Then suppose God gives power to see truth one day, I must not see it with this eye the next; but look up to Christ, and say, I cannot see at all.

II. Causes of this.

1. In opposing the outward principle of life, or first principle, and this second, I must live on Christ; hence I must not, I have no power to act myself in any measure, because all my strength is in him. When if this were true, a man might argue, because all grace is originally in Christ, hence no grace in me, because all glory is in Christ origi-

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nally; hence no glory shall be conveyed to me. No, this scripture reconciles these: "Because I live, therefore you shall live also," John xiv. 19. Because Christ is strong, hence he will make us strong in the inner man, and not in the spirit only: because Christ is glorious, hence we are predestinated "to be made like unto him." Because all sap lies in the root, to say therefore there is no sap or power in the branch to fructify; this is false.

2. The hypocritical activity of false professors, who having no spring to feed their wells, no Christ, nor bucket to draw from him; hence are their own men, and set up for themselves, till they turn bankrupts. And now because a Pharisee is so active as to go through sea and land to make a proselyte; therefore Paul has no activity of grace of Christ in him to go from land to sea to make Christians.

3. Sloth; a man sets upon a duty, and now because he cannot do it easily, nor quickly, he cannot do it at all. A man would have grace active without means; and God will not help in that way: and hence many Christians cannot cleave to Christ by love, or desire; no, so long as they pore upon their wants, no encouragement, but turn the mind, and consider well of the love and glory of Christ, then with Paul, 2 Cor. v. 14. "Christ's love constraineth."

4. Judging that to be the power of grace at all times, which is at sometimes; a man has given special occasion for the Lord to leave him; as the camp in Joshua's time, Josh. vii. and he thinks there is no more power at any time in any man. For then a man sees all the world cannot help, when if Achan were removed, the Spirit of the Lord would return again.

5. That hereby a man may have his sins without trouble; for a man has been troubled, and cannot get power, now he hears there is no such power to

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be expected, he looks to Christ, and if power come, well, if not, saith he, it is not my fault.

Thirdly, Those that deny the evidence of it, the evil of which apprehension, I conceive to be no less than taking away that which is the chief, if not only difference between hypocrites and saints in virgin-churches, for so it is made here. A man saith I have Christ, and so have not they: I ask, where is the Spirit? You have the deed, where is the seal? You have the testator, where is the executor, the spirit in you? Yes, I have it, it has witnessed Christ is mine.

Ans. It has witnessed, but what has it wrought? Where is the power of his death, killing thy lusts; where is the life of the Spirit of Jesus in you? where is the oil in your vessel? Truly I look for the bridegroom, but I regard not that, neither are others to regard it in way of evidence. Then I say the chief evidence is destroyed in the churches. I have known many that have had assurances, yet never saw them prove right, till it witnessed this was here. What should be the causes of this, and that men should make blusters in the churches, because of this, as though it was building on works? in several men they are several.

1. An aptness in men's hearts to out-run the truth, and to fall from one extreme to another. Many men there be that fall short of Christ, and the grace of God in and from him. and from their loose profane life, fall to duties, and imitate God's people, and then when they have got credit with good people, they judge well of them: and having made their peace hereby, with conscience, and not with God the judge; never look after the saving knowledge of, and fellowship with, and life from the Lord Jesus. Now, because men rest on this, these duties are no evidence; hence none are at all. The Corinthians first mourned not for the incestuous person; and when cast out wanted pity toward him. Calvin

preached against holidays, hence intrenched upon the Lord's day. Some of the separation see many churches where they have come corrupt, hence make them all no churches. A man is apt to think, because I have rested on myself, and found those signs which now are not found, hence all others do so too. And I believe divers books have occasioned it, which give signs that will not hold without a fuller explanation of them.

2. The apostacy of eminent professors, who have been deceived in their evidencing thus: And truly it would make one think the honesty of the world is but a fashion, and no evidence of any good estate; hence men say you have joy, so had the stony ground; you are blameless and strict, so was Paul a Pharisee; and Satan hereby shakes many a soul: hence the apostle comes in, Heb. vi. 9. and speaks of better things, and things that accompany salvation, and these should you follow. Hymeneus and Philetus felt both, 2 Tim. ii. 18, 19, 20, 21. Yet purge yourselves, and you shall be vessels of honour for the Master's use.

3. Corrupt experience; it may be a man walks so loosely without fear, or life, or love, that the Lord leaves him, and he can see no clear thorough-work, sometimes has pangs, and then hopes, sometime dead, then doubts; hence being vexed here, and finding no peace; if he find it any other way than this, there he rests. As it is observed with men, cloaths hide their shame: but when dead, their face is also covered, all their glory being then gone: so some glory of God appears here, but when Christians are dead, they cover this, I will look no more to it, all the glory of it is now gone, and here lies a deceit to love Christ for freeing me from this way of evidencing.

4. A heart that never felt the bitterness and bondage of sin as the greatest evil. Take a man full of fears of wrath; O now assurance is his chiefest good, and he will account it so; but if ever God did load the soul with

with sin, *e contra*, you will account of deliverance from this highly, nay a promise he will do it is sweet: but to be feeling those sinews of sin crack; O it is the joy of heaven that now fills that heart: The greatest evil in God's eyes is sin; the greatest good we have is redemption from it by a mighty hand: now not so much as to account of this highly, this is hard. Thus I have left these things to be thought of, I cannot avoid it, it lies in my text; and the rather, because of that scripture abused, "If any say, Lo here is Christ, or there believe it not." *i.e.* by signs: or in a wilderness, *i.e.* in a sorrowful estate, or in the privy chambers in frames of heart, believe it not neither. Take heed you do not wrest scriptures thus; It is said, "Esau hated Jacob for the blessing," Gen. xxvii. 41. This Spirit of grace is the blessing which saints account as the evidence of the dearest love; to separate from churches, from messengers of God, for this will yield you sorrow enough one day. I tell you, you shall not be found "fighters against men, but against God," and the Spirit of his grace; and the life of him who lives in heaven for us. Take heed you forget not oil in your vessels.

Fourthly, Those that acknowledge in their judgments all these things, but deny it in their lives, regard not the chaying this principle of life, and have peace in this, from a double ground.

By a fruitless faith which hangs on Christ; but never receives nor brings in this principle, as those, John ii. 24, 25. and hence though they receive none, yet they hang on him. And so their faith like a bucket without a bottom, draws up nothing.

A form of godliness before men. If a man should neither speak well, nor pray, &c. He would have no love, no respect, no receiving into church, but he cannot do it with life, and hence a form contents him, and there rests. So that now if conscience troubles, and says, those duties are done with no life of Christ, and

and Spirit ; he answers, yet I go to Christ : if this be all, why do you not cast off your form ? O then I should have no love from men : O this life of Christ is not prized, till with these virgins they feel the want of it, and it is too late, know this will be your woe at last. Look upon thy dead soul, all the glory is gone, and wait upon the word that the Lord make may thee live. Could you know this well of water, and ask, he would give it you. O beg for it then as for your life. Only first seek it in Christ, and so from Christ.

S E C T. IV.

Use 4. Of trial. WE live in a country which hath goodly trappings, rich hangings, glorious profession, burning lamps ; and hence many think themselves rich, when indeed poor ; many look to meet the bridegroom, when indeed they shall be shut out from the fellowship of the bridegroom. How shall I know that ? that all my sorrows, prayers, reformation, profession, is but a paint, an appearance, a fashion, a church-craft, which will stand me in no stead when the Lord shall appear, who shall judge the secrets of all hearts, by the word you hear this day, try it therefore by this rule, does it come from a principle of life or no ? Your lamp burns, but look what is in your vessel that feeds this flame. That as our divines speak, how the disciples could do greater works than Christ, and others wrought miracles besides Christ : how then do they prove that he is Christ ? It is answered, in all his miraculous works we are to consider not only *quid fecit*, i. e. what he did, but *qua virtute fecit*, from what power he did. The apostles and others did miracles, but it was *aliena virtute* ; Christ did them, but it was *propria virtute*. So many an unsound heart he may do greater works than saints, and his lamp burn brighter. Therefore in this case we are not to look so much to what is done, as from what

what power and principle it is done : for therein the best hypocrite ever fails. We shall ever observe in some beasts there are *umbræ rationis*, yet there is no rational soul, nor any wise man will believe that their acts proceed from such a principle ; so there are shadows of the power of grace in a carnal heart, and yet no judicious Christian will say they come from an inward soul, or principle of life. Consider therefore whether there is this principle or no ; you see there is profession, you have a name to live in the judgment of all the church, but search your hearts, and see from what principle it proceeds, for if this be wanting, all is nothing : as he that had beer given him, when milk and wine, and sugar was put into it to mend it, said, the wine is good, and the milk is good, but the beer is bad, so profession, affection is good, but the heart, the man is bad, Jer. ii. 21. “ Though thou “ wash thee with nitre, thy sin is marked before the “ Lord.” And that the trial may be full and fair, I shall shew negatively, the several sorts of men that act not from an inward principle, yet carry it out as though the bitterness of death was past, and the bridgeroom theirs.

1. When a man's principle is nothing but the power of created nature expressing itself, and setting the best face forward, in the gilded rottenness of some moral performances, wherein a man saith, he does what he can ; for there is this principle in most of men, a desire to be saved, nature saith so, and according to the intention of this desire, so according men will do more or less ; and hereupon sooth up themselves, when they see they cannot do as others do, or as the Lord commands ; I do as well as I can. Nay, when condemned by the word which meets them, I do as well as I can, I believe, I repent, I pray, I remember the word, I do as well as I can, and so they hope God accepts of that ; and though I believe no man but may be hired to do more than he does, yet nature may do much ; hence I heard an Arminian
once

once say, if faith will not work it, then set reason a work, and we know how men have been kings and lords over their own passions by improving reason, and from some experience of the power of nature, men have come to write large volumes in defence of it; and it is known the Arminians, though they ascribe somewhat to grace, and in words all to grace, yet indeed they lay the main stress of the work upon a man's own will, and the royalty and sovereignty of that liberty; but to leave them and to come to ourselves, is it not a common thing for men to make lies their refuse, and to say, I was in a woful condition once, and never looked after God, but now I bless the Lord it is otherwise with me. How? Now I believe, repent, &c. And so I confess all I do is full of weakneses, yet I do what I can; and thus they are like to men that have old garments new dressed, they have made them as good as they can; and like the young man, Luke xviii. 21. "All these things have I done from my youth, yet one thing was wanting, which was to forsake all, and so himself, that the disciples said, who then can be saved: with man it is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

You say you do as much as you can: I say do so, but it is impossible for man from any strength of man, and you have no more yet, John i. 13. "Born again, not of the will of man, but of God." There is in some men a birth, like to the new birth, which is of the will and power of man, but O this is not this inward principle which the Almighty Power of God creates, and therefore know it, if you get no other oil in your lamps, you shall never meet the bridegroom.

2. When a mans' principle is the power of holy example, whereby many a one is drawn to do more than otherwise he would. Many men think for a while as that man spake; men talk of being worth thousands,

I would fain see the men ministers preach and others speak well, we must do this and that, but I would fain see the men that do it. Now it sometime falls out that the Lord sets before mens eyes some pattern Christians, hereupon they think thus; here are two contrary ways, they cannot both lead to heaven, their way is better than mine, and doubtless leads to life, mine doth not, therefore let me live like them. And hence there shall not be any fast, but they will be at it; not a sermon near, but they will go wet and dry to hear it; nor any duty in family, but they will imitate it, and hence read and learn, that they may be like them. No Christians in the country hated, but they will love them, nor ceremonies cast off, but they will abhor them; and hence they reflect upon their patterns, and think their estate safe, because they are as good as a Christian's outside: And hence like some dead cattle, there is nothing good but their skin, so there is nothing good in these, but their imitating outside. Thus it was with Joash while Jehojada lived, 2 Chr. xxiv. Hence he fell like ivy with the oak, when God cut him down: Thus it was with these five foolish virgins, a man may follow good examples, but not rest in bare imitation of them: And hence a blessed man is described, Psal. i. negatively, from not imitating the wicked, not from imitating the good; because good men may be in many things ill examples, and it ever proves so in these men that have no more than this principle; hence if they be loose in their tongues, or on the Sabbath, their plea is, they are like unto them. And hence come all your acquired excellencies; a man is an imitating creature, led by example, and a carnal man out of the heart of hypocrisy in himself, will imitate the divine nature which is in another; and hence men not only take up such practices, but such opinions only, because such and such are of that mind: And men change practices and opinions as examples do change; in Joshua's time great reformation,

he no sooner died, but all fell off again : then they were for purity of ordinances and God's worship, now they serve Baalim : O consider, here in an outward, but no inward principle !

3. Those whose principle is nothing but external applause and praise of men, and this will carry a man beyond all the best examples : Nay, sometime to be singular and a man alone ; a Pharisee's trumpet shall be heard to the town's end, while simplicity walks thorough the town unseen : Hence a man will sometimes covertly commend himself, and myself ever comes in, and tells you a long story of conversion ; and an hundred to one, if some lie or other slip not out with it. Why, the secret meaning is, I pray admire me, hence complain of wants and weaknesses ; pray think what a broken-hearted Christian I am ; and hence if comforted they complain, if not, they will comfort themselves ; hence many lift up eyes and hands, and fetch deep sighs in prayer, remember and note sermons, look now what a gift I have : hence if you come to their company, they will have so many good words as may make you think well of them, and then the market is almost done with them : hence men forsake their friends, and trample underfoot the scorns of the world, they have credit elsewhere : To maintain their interest in the love of godly men they will suffer much : hence men in the ministry pray for grace to beautify and perfect their parts, that so they may preach and convert and have credit : hence men meditate new light, and profess deep things that few know, that men may worship the rising sun : hence the Lord is neglected secretly, yet honoured openly, because there is no wind in their chambers to blow their sails, and therefore there they stand still : hence many men keep their profession, when they lose their affection, they have by the one a name to live, and that is enough, though their hearts be dead : and hence so long as you love or commend them, so long they love you,
but

but if not, they will forsake you ; they were warm only by another's fire ; and hence having no principle of life within, soon grow dead : This is the water that turns a Pharisee's mill, and the Lord passeth a heavy doom, "You have your reward." I have wondred that the opinion of men, nay, dream of men's thoughts should act men ; only it is a curse of God, that when men despise his honour, the greatest good, they shall be fed with the basest good.

4. Those whose principle is nothing else but their own gain of outward blessings. Many there be that make not their honour, so much as their bellies their gods, and they rule them, Phil. iii. 19. hence the shop-keeper will give good words when he sells his commodity, he should lose much of his custom else ; and hence the minister preacheth conscionably that his gain may come in, 1 Thes. ii. 4, 5. Hence people would be as good as the best, they cannot get a lot in all the country else. Hence a man is sometime content to forsake all for Christ, that he may make a booty of Christ, as Judas did. Hence when Christ feeds them with loaves, then the people will make him a king, John vi. though afterward they cry crucify him. So men deal with Christ as the soldiers did, that caught him, that they might strip him of his garments. And hence many men if they see sorrows and wants attending them, if they attend on Christ, forsake him. Look upon our own land, many so long as they could enjoy Christ with fair weather, cry out of ceremonies, and prophaning of sabbath : yet this not being to be had, creep to them, and read the book for prophaning thereof. Many shadows have been seen since our sun hath risen here, and this way they looked : but viewing other mens wants, and fearing their own losses, and conceiving they may meet with Massah in this wilderness, refuse to follow. And lest this should seem to be the cause, cry out, we are separatists, or strongly possess

possess themselves against all relations, there is no living at all here.

Look but at home, how many doves (that prove but ravens, and live on the prey) come hither to our windows, and have followed Christ to this world's end; when he fed them with loaves, they made him their king: but now he hath taken away what once they desired, because there is better bread to be laboured for; now they forsake him, and live on the spoil. This is no inward principle. And hence when mens expences for Christ, exceed their receipts from Christ, they cease spending, and fall in the high way to begging at the door of the world.

5. Those whose principle is nothing else but the strength of natural conscience, which will set men a-doing, when they have neither praise from men, nor gain from Christ for their labour. For the Lord deals with some men, as the Romans did with some of their prisoners; they would chain a prisoner and his keeper together, and let them go up and down: so God chains many a poor prisoner of hell and his conscience together, and lets them go together. And hence many a man keeps peace with his conscience, and cannot give it the slip for all the world heaped up with gold, as Balaam said.

Now there are two things in a natural conscience, Rom. ii. 15.

1. To accuse; hence a man dares not omit prayer, dares not commit a sin he has a mind to; conscience would then roar. Hence many keep constantly set duties in private, and tremble at small sins: not because they take any delight in the one, or are weary of the other; but because they are ever under the eye of this Judge.

2. To excuse, and to give much sweetness when a man follows the dictates thereof, hence a man though carnal, will die for his religion, and that with some chearfulness, because conscience cheers within, and
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sings him asleep in trouble. And hence a man will cry out of all the glorious hypocrisies of men, because to walk according to conscience is sweeter to him. And hence a man comforts himself, it is my conscience, Mark xii. 33. To love God "is better than burnt offerings." Hence a man will profit exceedingly in what he holds, Gal. i. 14. because zealous for it for conscience: and yet this is but a principle of nature, not an inward principle of life, whose property is to seek the subversion of corrupt nature, as natural conscience seeks the garnishing of it and the actions thereof.

6. Those whose principle is the fear of death, and hell; raised not so much by the power of conscience, as by the power of the word. And hence come complaints about a man's estate; that a man can have no rest by all duties that he has done, or doth. Hence following of the means, running to the best ministry, mourning, and lamenting, and confessing sin, Mat. iii. 7. "O generation of vipers," &c. And hence prizing of favour and comfort, Psal. lxxviii. 34, 35. Hence many do take this for their conversion, and say, I heard such a minister at such a time, and then I cried out I was damned, and thought I saw the devil; yea, and to hell you may for all this, if no other principle. Indeed, there is this fear in the elect, but drives them to the ark, as Noah: but those, when their fear is over, they fall to fight against the Lord.

7. Those whose principle is nothing else but the immediate actings of the Spirit of God upon them. For sometime the Spirit of God comes upon men, as light shines on the mud wall, yet dwells not there as in the sun. And hence many speak, pray, prophecy admirably, as Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 3, 4. Many men like carters bring others goods, that are not possessors of them. Now these are 1. External enlargements, and hence a man doth many things which he has no inward power to perform, the Spirit is there assisting; hence

hence he cannot do so at another time, but it is the Spirit only assisting. And hence a man may have abundance of knowledge, and he not affected with it; he may live, and pray with applause of men; others wish they were like him, yet live without love, and speak without feeling, and do without life, hence men leave themselves here. 2. Internal pangs, the Spirit of God begets some inward grief, especially when outward evils press, then inward flashes and desires, but they are soon done. There is no spring, no principle within. What the difference is between saints unevenness, and this unconstancy, you shall hear hereafter: yet these are wrestlings of spirit not yet conquering, and hence it possesses not the soul.

8. When mens principle is nothing else but common gifts, which are inward, and abiding long in the soul. That a man now thinks he has grace, and sure signs of the Lord's love, and here is fastened: when there be two things wherein it appears here is no inward principle. 1. These gifts ever puff up, and make a man something in his own eyes, as the Corinthian knowledge did. And many a private man thinks himself fit to be a minister, many a minister better than all the parish besides; when Paul was the least of all the saints. And hence commonly they degenerate to pride and form. 2. These keep men strangers to Christ, and the life of faith; they have these affections, yet ignorant of Christ, take these as signs of his love, and live without him. And this is indeed the inner principle which all the wicked in the world want; there is in true grace an infinite circle: a man by thirsting receives, and receiving thirsts for more. But hence the Spirit is not poured out abundantly on churches, because men shut it out by shutting in, and contenting themselves with their common graces and gifts, Mat. vii. 29. Examine if it be thus. If so,

1. You cannot come to the Lord, John v. 44.
“how can ye believe?”

2. Nor

2. Nor to receive any thing from the Lord if you do, James iv. 3. "When you ask to spend it on your lusts," when that carries you.

3. This pulls down the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, when other things rule us, and not himself alone.

4. Satan will have this against you, as against Job, "You serve not the Lord for nought." To what purpose are your new moons; church-reformations, if it be thus? Now, because it hath been replied to what was formerly said, that Christ was the vessel, not our souls. I shall therefore confirm the latter to be the truth, by these reasons.

1. Mystical places of scripture are to be interpreted by plain. Now though Christ may be the antitype of these vessels of the temple, yet he is not plainly said to be a vessel; but souls are called so, Rom. ix. 23.—2 Cor. iv. 7.—Acts ix. 15. "Paul is a chosen vessel." 1 Thess. iv. 4. "We are to possess our vessels in holiness."—2 Tim. ii. 20. "Vessels of honour."

2. The Spirit is not in Christ as in a vessel, but as in a fountain; hence John iii. 34. "Christ hath received the Spirit without measure."

3. The foolish virgins had vessels; because it is said, "they took their lamps, but no oil with them." Their folly was not in not providing vessels. Hence the foolish virgins did not afterward beg their vessels, but their oil.

4. The wisdom of the wise did appear, in that they did provide oil for their vessels. If therefore the vessel be Christ, therein lies the wisdom of the wise, that they got the Spirit to put into Christ, and the folly of the foolish, they got not the Spirit to put into him. Or the one got Christ Jesus full of the Spirit; the other, Christ Jesus void of it. When whoever hath Christ, must have in him the fulness of the Spirit also.

5. The other interpretation crosseth the main scope of this part of the parable, which is to shew the difference

ference between the virgins: All professed Christ, went to meet the Bridegroom: but here was the difference, they never looked for to get the Spirit in them: and this is most suitable to men raised out of the dregs of popery, where works being abolished, Christ is owned, and therein do well, but herein fail.

Thus you have heard the use of trial negatively. What this inward principle is affirmatively, you have generally heard; and shall more particularly in the other two doctrines. Only this I shall add; it consists of two parts.

1. Our life in Christ by faith.

2. Christ's life in us by his Spirit. Faith empties the soul, and looks upon it as dead, and sees its life laid up in Christ; and hence forsakes itself, and embraces the Lord of glory. Secondly, The Spirit comes and possesseth a forsaken empty house, and there lives and dwells. Both these the apostle mentions, Gal. ii. 20. Eph. iii. 17.—John xv. 4. As two married together, their souls live not where they are, but in each other. The one cares not how to please herself, but her husband; and *e contra*. So that lest any weak soul should be discouraged, that thinks there is no principle of life, because such a blind, empty dead heart, wandering from God, &c. Nay, when the Lord quickens it, O it is lost again! Nay, when quickened, O then when it comes to, it is feeble! I tell you it must be so. This makes you lay up your life in him; this death is your life. And lest any false heart should be here deceived, that saith he has Christ; 'If you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of his.' The saints have this sometime, their temple is filled with glory; and for their general course, they are admirers of the Lord Jesus; and account his life to be life, and all their life beside to be a continual death. There is not any grace but they say, O that I had it.

S E C T.

S E C T. V.

Use 5. Of Exhortation. TO every man, as ever you look to be with Christ Jesus another day, get this oil in your vessels. The Lord doth in this parable set before your eyes the estate of the purest virgin churches and professors in the world, and it is his infinite love to tell us before hand, before the time be past, to tell us, that many of these shall be shut out from the presence of the Lord Jesus, whom themselves and others think shall not, and yet this love would be but little, unless the Lord had made known the cause or defect in not getting oil to their vessel. O consider therefore, here you are like to fail; you that have lamps, before the cry and bridegroom comes, acknowledge Christ's love, and be overcome by it to get oil in your vessels; when Rahab knew that the Lord would destroy all Jericho, now she lays about her to preserve her life. What is the means? To tie the scarlet thread at the window: O she would be sure to get and keep that there. You know the Lord Jesus will come and discover the unsound profession, and destroy the glory of the world, and churches too: It may be ye have had sore fears, what if he should cut me off, and cast me out, as possibly he may? and I may as well as eminent professors. I tell you, none ever perished but because of this. How just had Rahab's judgment been, if she had refused to get her scarlet thread there, and yours if now ye get not your oil in your vessel? How many are there that have lived fairly and died quietly, and when they are dead and knock, the door is shut, that then wring their hands, O had I but known of this! I would have spent my care and strength, and tears, and thoughts how to have filled my vessel, but I knew it not. This time will shortly come, and if you know it now, and do not set upon it, what a cut

will this be? As therefore the apostle exhorts, Heb. iv. 1. "Having a promise of entering into rest, fear least you fall short of it." I say so much more here, knowing how only you shall enter into Christ's rest, fear lest you fall short of this; I hope I shall not, I thank God my course is blameless, spotless, I have forsaken the sins of places, and pollutions of ordinances; so these were virgins also. O but my lamp burns as bright as any man's I know; so did the foolish virgins. O but they all think well of me; so were these thought of, till the Lord said, "I know you not." O but I look to Christ, to meet with him, and salvation from him; so did these, and yet were shut out from Christ. If the Lord should have said, it was because they had not wealth enough, nor world enough, every man would not have been wanting here, but would have striven to have got enough of that, though it were not to be had; but there is enough in Christ to enrich you, who has the Spirit without measure to do it: The Spirit may breathe now.

Means 1. Labour to feel and mourn under thy whole corrupt principles, that have acted thee hitherto: for many men are sensible sometimes of some particular acts, and jarrings of their hearts and life with the rule; and then they seek forgiveness of, and grace against them, and then they hope all is well, then they do many things, and hear John gladly, and in plainness and integrity of their hearts think that all is well. But still they fall short of a principle of life, because they never felt a whole corrupt principle, and how in every thing it crosseth God, not only in the corrupt, but most glorious actions. For all men naturally turn from being open, to secret enemies; and from being secret, to be subtle enemies, and to undermine the Lord in all they do. Now many see it but not the evil of it, nor mourn under it. Hence the Lord never sends another Spirit, because they have not the spirit of heaviness for want of it. But when

when a man sees that in every thing he is carried and acted by a principle of bitterness against the Lord, and lives without the Spirit of the Lord to act him ; the Lord is not far from that soul when he feels this, and mourns before the Lord, because of this, and the want of that, 1 Kings viii. 38. So Christ said, " because I said I go away, sorrow has filled your hearts." John xvi. 6, 7. This is the very reason why faints have the Comforter, his absence fills their hearts with sorrow ; because when he is gone, O the straitness, vileness of a corrupt heart ! you say it may be. If this be not a right principle, what is ? *Ans.* To undermine all false works ; O therefore, feel this plague ! If ever God works this grace, feel you must the want of it, and if you do mourn then you are under it : and O mourn, 1. By considering the evil of it, you can mourn after a dead father, and shall you not over a dead heart. 2. To think there should be so much Spirit in Christ, and not a drop for me. Is he so angry with me ? See therefore I pray you that you are led by ill principles, or false principles. I pray, but self-love sets me a work ; I profess, but praise of men acts me ; I observe duties in secret, but natural conscience only carries me. No surer sign of ruin than for the Lord to hide these things from you ; nor of love than when he shews this, and gives you not only sense of some one act, but a spirit of heaviness under this. This empties the vessel, and so makes us vessels of honour : do not therefore set thyself so much to do, as to see where thy evil principle is, in all thou doest.

Means 2. Repair now to the fountain of life, for a principle of life from him, and fetch it from him.

Question. What is that ? and how shall I fetch it from him ?

Answer. 1. It is not a man's own striving, a man may imitate nature, but cannot make nature : All the world cannot make one poor flie. And as it is

artis celare artem, so when he hath done he may deceive himself and others, but nothing else. "Born "not of the will of man:" A man is in great distress of conscience for sin past, fear of death for time to come, and now he comes just as far as a devil; then prays Lord save me, and now comes as far as nature can carry him, and therefore is eased, and now he hath satan's black seal upon him, and self flattery hath carried him on. The fountain of life is not here.

2. It is not the law, it convinceth one, and he complains; it condemns another, and he cries out; it irritates another, and he falls to do what he can; but the law cannot give life, Gal. iii. 21.

2. It is not bare ordinances, which are of themselves but husks and shells, and empty pipes; witness the cries of many a man sabbath after sabbath, no life, and that for a long time: nay, he grows worse.

4. It is not God simply considered, he is indeed the fountain of life, but sin has sealed that Tountain; hence many a one goes to him, and departs from him with frowns.

5. Where is life then? In Christ: I know he is Lord and Prince of life. Yet consider, as God-man no life is in him for you, as to be communicated to you. Where then? It is in the blood and death of the Lord of life. You are ready to undervalue this life. O consider, what it must cost the Son of God? and where it must lie, Heb. ix. 14. "If bulls and "goats blood washed the flesh, much more this "blood," &c. Many a man feels a blind dead heart, and all duties dead: and hence uses many persuasions to himself, yet they continue so still, because he never looks to this blood. There is this excellency in Christ's blood, not only to cleanse from guilt, and power of sin, but from dead works, and none else can.

Now

Now therefore repair hither for it ; know what your lives will and must cost.

Now how shall this be done ?

Answer. 1. Prize this blood, and satisfy thy soul with it, choose it, and rest in it, in the Lord himself as sufficient, John vi. 53. " Except ye eat and " drink," &c. many account it a common thing ; you receive it not then, but trample it under their feet, many esteem of it, but they feel not themselves with it, nor quiet their hearts with life there first : and hence it fall out thus.

2. Keep this rule, content not thyself with that measure which thou hast from Christ, but be thankful for it, and falling short, call ever for more ; but satiate thyself with that which is in Christ.

If thou canst not do this, if it is beyond thy strength, then consider Christ has words of life, John vi. O beg for that, and for those words ! " Hear what " the Lord will say," Psal. li. viii. You cannot see nor come to Christ : then " hear, and your souls " shall live." Who knows what the Lord may do. It is not possible for man to do it, but the Lord Jesus may and can.

O then you that have this principle, let all your actions issue and spring from hence ! As Paul exhorted Timothy, " Stir up that gift that is in thee. " Up Deborah, up. Awake harp and lute," saith David. Do not say, I can do nothing, and so the Lord must do all ; do not say, I have a dead heart, and can do nothing, but stir it up. It was the Lord's complaint, Isa. lxiv. 7. " None took hold of the " Lord, nor stirred up himself" to that end. It may be some of you have some strength. O put it forth ? I know all strength is from Christ, but there is a permanent strength in you. You are not dead to act, you wrong the Lord and his grace if you think so. As it is a heavy sin to shut up and imprison natural truth, Rom. i. 18. So much more the power
of

of grace. Others have lost it, O recover it ! And hence Paul prays for this earnestly, Eph. iii. 15. " The Lord strengthen you with might in the inner " man." And therefore put this forth to act, and be sure you act only from the Spirit of grace.

Question. How shall I do this ?

Answer. 1. Set the Lord Jesus in all his glory before you. There is that excellency of the knowledge of Christ's person, that it makes us be and live like him, and according to the propinquity of our souls and eyes to Christ, so we are like him. As it is with the sun, when it is gone from the earth, there are not so much as leaves on the trees, yet when it returns, the trees bring forth fruit. Or as it is in heaven, 1 John iii. 2. so in this life, when we see him in a glass, 1 Cor. iii. 18. That look as it is with an ambitious man, when he is in the presence of men he will manifest all his excellency, nothing shall be done to gain discredit. So if the Lord and his life be your excellency, when you see Christ, you will approve yourselves to him. See him therefore beholding and accepting ; and that grace you would put forth, see it in him ; it is strange to see what a stream of spirit comes sometimes this way.

2. Keep the remembrance of the exceeding greatness of his love fresh in your minds, in that " he has " quickened you," Eph. ii. 4, 5, and that this life was by his death. All the flowers of the field cast their favour but for a time, and then away with them; but Christ's love and Christ's death do usually always breath a favour of life to a sincere heart that never knew what the sting of death meant, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Christ loves Christians, because he dies that we should live. But how ? Because we thus judged. God has made man an agent by counsel : Now some Christians go to the Lord to help them, but set not prayer of faith awork, and hence have no water of life. Some do, but use not other means to

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set the understanding (the mind of faith,) on work, to quicken it up to act, and so would have life brought in, but not by the right door ; an empty vessel will not be full of this water till now, that the mouth of the understanding is open. Now many things are to be considered to act every grace, as God's command and promise, &c. But this is that which in the general quickens, O Christ's love, which constrains the soul to live to him. According as a man thus receives from Christ, so he returns to him. As it is observed, one sign that when a people visit not their minister, they receive no good ; so here : That is a sign of a decaying Christian, for usually they that get good by Christ, cannot by their good will stay away from Christ. So then the soul will return in all fruitful obedience to the Lord, when he receives the sweet of the love of the Lord. The Lord doth me good methinks, and hence he follows the Lord. Satan hence prevails with the heart, because of its external objects, and a party within ; so here Christ prevails, because there is a party within, when external objects are propounded. Let a man have life, if he have no food he will never live. If bread be before him, and he feed not on it, and that abundantly, he will never have strength, so this love of Christ in us, is life in us, and food for us.

3. Famish the contrary principle, the strength whereof is by sucking in the sweet, and receiving in carnal content from the creature, Rom. xiii. 14. " Put on the Lord Jesus," his Spirit, his righteousness, his life, his graces, " Make no provision for the flesh." Many Christians look up to Christ in all means, but can do nothing, because they have some delight either in lawful or unlawful things, that lies between him and Christ. Hence that grows strong, the other feeble.

4. Die to all self-confidence in grace received, or self-contentment with any measure of it ; for thereby
you

you stop the Spirit : for we of ourselves cannot think a good thought. Therefore be strong in Christ, and hence, Eph. vi. 10, 11, 12. A man is apt to fall to a double extreme, to be strong in the Lord without putting on graces ; and to trust to them without being strong in him. Corn must die before it lives, so must you ; and rest not content with the measure received, but look for more, and hence be thankful, and say, it is not I, but Christ ; yet look for more.

5. If no means come to give strength, consider sadly if you have not broken covenant with God, as in Samson's case, God was in covenant with him, but he had broken it on his part, hence his strength was gone. I know no place that breeds men of larger covenants than this place, by sea and land, personal, and especially church-covenants. Now thy strength is gone. Dost thou not live in breach of covenant ? Not only it is broken, but you live in it. You covenant to cleave to the Lord, or if you depart, to return soon again, but you lie in your falls. Nay your covenant and returning heals your horror only, not your sin. Your covenant to love brethren dearly, but a little offence one gives ; or hopes of a bigger lot, will tempt thy heart to leave them to their own shifts. You covenant to submit to officers in the Lord, but some take liberty to speak what they will, and others do what they list. To watch over your brethren to put life in them, but you grow a stranger, and it may be see them not once in a quarter, unless at church. But can it be said they are any better for thee ? O your sins are double, and hence your plagues of heart are worse now, more hard to be wrought upon, and hence sin and satan lead you, Psal. lxxviii. 57, 60, 61. O consider this sin, the strength of God is taken as captain of the camp, that when you cry, Lord help me, there it is. But alas it is gone from you, and it

It is in satan's hand, not only your strength, but God's strength, and the soul is taken captive. O therefore mourn for this, lest you mourn at last.

CHAP. XIX. SECT. I.

Sheweth that there is such a fulness or measure of Grace in the heart of Believers, which the most refined Hypocrites never arise unto.

Doct. 3. **T**HAT there is a certain plenitude, fulness, or full measure of the Spirit of Grace in the hearts of the faithful, which the most glorious, yet unsound professors of virgin-churches want, and have not in their vessels, but fall short of.

Just as these foolish virgins, they had their lamps, a burning and shining profession. And had they no more? Yes surely, for their lamp how could it burn, but by means of some oil? They had their wick touched and dipped in oil, some lighter strokes and superficial impressions of the Spirit. They had not their vessels filled with oil, they had not this degree and full measure of the Spirit. This they fell short of, and herein appeared the difference. There are certain inward touches, an inward lighter dye of God's Spirit, which serves to beget a most eminent profession before men, but never to make the soul sincere indeed before the eyes of God. That look as some naturalists make three or four kinds of life, differing only as higher or lower degrees of life, though not of the same life; as plants have a vegetative life only to grow, but no sensitive to see; because their forms are more drowned in their matter; sensitive in beasts, yet not rational; rational men in, but not angelical, &c. So here, a greater degree of the Spirit's

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working, makes a difference in kind between Christian and Christian. It is the Spirit that makes a man live, it is the same Spirit by a greater stroke, makes a man live the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. Yet there are two kinds of lives as far different as sensitive and vegetative; and though the rational has both, yet it is neither of both. So though a saint lives the life of reason and morality, yet there is another life he has, which doth differ from these of a high degree, and of another kind. I do not say therefore that a sincere soul only has a greater degree of the same grace, but that he is distinguished by a greater degree of grace and working of the Spirit of grace from an unsound heart. As a man may love another, but not with a conjugal love, here is now a degree of love, but not of the same love, for it is not a whit conjugal; it might then be sinful in some men, so it is here. A man that has filled his stomach with meat may have some desire after it, but not an hungry desire, not in that degree; hence not hungry at all. So "the sluggard desires and has not," a carnal heart desires, and another desires the Lord Jesus; a carnal sluggish heart desires and has not, but another hungers and is filled; he has not any degree of the same hunger. It is therefore granted there are desires, and joys, and light, and growth in false hearts, but there is not that fulness of joy, that fulness of light, that fulness of the Spirit which is in the faithful, and here they ever fall short. Yet note,

1. There is not a perfect measure; nor the fulness that shall be when our souls shall be gathered to them that are made perfect.

2. Nor yet that there is that fulness the saints aim at; for it is the resurrection they aim at, Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.

3. Nor yet a glutting fulness, that men have manna enough, and say, the main work is wrought, and that is enough: not such a fulness as satisfies their appetite

petite from longing for more. But which satisfies and quiets their conscience in regard of the uprightness of their souls before the Lord.

S E C T. II.

BUT for the more full and clear explication of this point, I shall shew you these three things,

1. That hypocrites may have some inward touches of God's Spirit.

2. That the very reason of their falseness is, because they have no more than such touches or strokes.

3. That there is a fulness the saints come to, which others want.

To be shewed—1. Positively.—2. Negatively.

1. That hypocrites may have not only outward shews, but some inward lighter strokes of God's Spirit. As

1. Of the Spirit restraining and confining, nay benumbing of corruption, as Paul was blameless, nay he had no mind nor will to many sins, nay did not think he had any living contempt and enmity of God in his heart. Hence Rom. vii. 9. It is said, "When the command came sin revived." Was it not living before? Yes, but it was asleep, it was benumbed, like cold snakes, but not killed.

2. Of the Spirit preventing and exciting unto many, nay, to any duty of the law in general, and that sometime by fears of misery and terrors of the law, Deut. v. 23. And sometime by love and mercy, morally affecting the heart, Exod. xix. 4, 5, 6. "You have heard what the Lord hath done, Will you now enter into covenant?" Yes, yet what is said of them? Psal. lxxviii. 37. "They were false in God's covenant."

3. There may be some operative and quickening grace of the gospel, Heb. vi. 4. "They were enlightened," &c.

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4. There may be some edifying and co-operating gifts of law and gospel, whereby a man may not only be useful and helpful to some, but to the church of God, as those that did prophesy in Christ's name. And these may be so inward, that they think themselves clean and sincere; as Abimelech.

II. That the reason of their unsoundness is, because they have no more than lighter strokes of God's Spirit.

As I might shew in all these, Paul is blameless, yet far enough from having sin mortified by Christ, and hence professeth, "We did serve divers lusts," Tit. iii. 3. The Israelites cry out, they "will do what God will have them;" Yet "O that there were such an heart!" Deut. v. 29. They in Heb. vi. "were enlightened and tasted," yet fell. He therefore adds, "We are persuaded (ver. 9.) better things of you." They did "prophesy in Christ's name," Matth. vii. yet "depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." But see it more particularly, Mark xii. 33. Saith the Scribe to him, "To love the Lord is better than all burnt-offerings." Some Jews did rest there, but neglected the inward work; but this man the inward work was prized in his judgment, he had both profession and some affection: And was he now entered into the kingdom of God? No. Here was his wound, he fell short of it some degrees. Hence it is said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." So the Israelites, why did not they enter? Was not the land good? O yes! That report the worst of the spies brought: But their hearts were not taken with the goodness of it, as Caleb's and Joshua's were. And hence they were shut out, Numb. xiii. 27. and xiv. 7, 8, 24. So it is here. So an unsound heart may be enlightened, as it is there, Heb. vi. 4, 5. But there is a marvellous light which they never have, they have not such a degree, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And hence, Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4. "The Lord has
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“not given you eyes to see to this day.” Did the Lord give them no eyes to see, no hearts to be affected with what they did see? Why came they then out of Egypt? Why did they sing when they saw Pharaoh drowned? Why, they had not such eyes and such hearts as Moses had, not unto that day.

So for turning to the Lord. Do not many unsound hearts turn over a new leaf? Do they not, not only outwardly, but inwardly too? Where is the flaw then? In the degree, Jer. iii. 10. “Judah has not turned “with her whole heart, but treacherously.” So there may be some growth and life in false unsound hearts, that may after away: but where is the wound? Look in the parable of the seed; Some grew not at all; some did grow, but not having depth of earth, fell again: Others fell not in persecution, but there were the roots of thorns that choaked the seed; the good ground’s seed came to ripeness and fulness of fruit, though some in a greater degree than others; yet none at all (no ripe fruit) in the rest. Hence the Lord is said to “weigh the heart,” Prov. xvi. 2. Men think they are humbled, and do believe, but God finds them too light, as “Balthazar was weighed and found “too light.” And thus it will be seen at the last day, when Christ Jesus shall appear, that all the most glorious profession of many a man is therefore rejected, because found too light.

III. That there is a fulness which the saints have, and which others fall short of. Which I shall shew,

I. Positively and affirmatively from what has been said, Prov. xii. 26. “The righteous is more excellent,” John xiv. 17. “Whom the world cannot “receive, because it knows him not.” There is that Spirit in saints which no unregenerate man knows, hence desires nor. Because he dwells in you, he doth not only send some gifts, or work somewhat there, but he dwells there, he fills the heart. Hence the end of Christ’s death is, “to purchase to himself a
“peculiar

"peculiar people," Tit. ii. 14. Of such a spirit, such a holiness that only themselves know. So it is that which all the prophets press to, to a higher pitch; and hence that charge of Josh. xxii. 5. And it is a peculiar fruit of election, Eph. i. 4. 1. To be holy. 2. Before him. 3. In love.

II. Negatively. If there should not be such a distinguishing fulness,

1. Then the whole ministry of Christ is in vain, and so destroyed; for what is the end of that, that God raiseth up any ministers in the church, but this, Acts xxvi. 18. "To turn men from darkness to light." If this light was only that in Heb. vi. 4. then the end of the ministry was to work hypocrisy. "And from the power of Satan to God," there the Lord leaves them not, "but that they may receive remission of sins," &c.

2. If there should not be this fulness, most of the promises should be destroyed, and God's faithfulness fail, and the saints be deceived. For promises are made to them that mourn, to them that hunger, to them that believe, &c. Now many hypocrites mourn, and desire, and the stony ground believed. Then it seems the promise is not true. Yes, and therefore there must be another kind of mourning, another and higher degree of the Spirit of faith, &c. *i. e.* not of the same faith, but of another kind of faith.

3. If not, then all Christian endeavour after a higher measure of grace should be destroyed. For if any man only has Christ in his eye, that he may have him, I say that is sweet; but I say, you shall never have him, unless you receive him. O but many receive him! as John ii. 23. yet Christ "committed not himself to them, for he saw what they were." Now therefore if you regard not the measure, *i. e.* such a kind of receiving of him, you will never seek for it, pray for it, nor learn to know it. And hence it is said, Prov. xv. 24. "The way of life is above to the righteous:"

If

If it were not above, of that height, he would never come over difficulties to it.

4. If not, there is no true hope that any man can have: but it is utterly destroyed, 1 John iii. 3. "He that has this hope purgeth himself." I am as good as such a one: But, as Christ is pure. That is his copy and his pattern.

5. The very people of God are destroyed from having a being in the world, if this measure makes not the difference. If it be replied, the Lord Jesus makes the difference. It is very true, those that are in covenant, they have God to be their God, that makes one difference; but if there be not some peculiar workmanship of the Spirit in them, then though they have God their God, yet the second part of the covenant is destroyed, *i. e.* they are not the Lord's peculiar people that have more than common wash-work. For we are not only the Lord's people by choice and purchase, but by new creation also, Isa. lxiv. 7, 8, 9.

S E C T. III.

Use. 1. **HENCE** we see the sight of no grace is no part of a Christian's grace and holiness. The five foolish virgins were not shut out because they did not see they had no oil, but because when they did see it, (as the Lord will make you see it first or last) they did not get such a measure and quantity of it as might fill their vessel. You may go down to hell with complaints I have nothing, unless the eternal Spirit work something at last in you.

Use 2. Hence take heed of quenching and limiting the Spirit of God, when it is working upon and breathing in your hearts at any time, in any means. Because you may then fall short of this measure of it, and so be shut out at last. Look as it was with the Israelites, it is said of them, that "they could not
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"drive out the Canaanites," *i. e.* they would not by reason of their sloth; and hence they were pricks, nay snares to them. So the Lord begins to work strangely upon some men, but they are presently humble enough, and have comfort enough, and grace enough, and cannot be better, and hence God makes their sins snares and thorns to their sorrow and ruin afterward. Nay beloved, many a one will quench the Spirit. O take heed of it! Thus,

1. The Spirit not only convinceth, but humbles his heart, and shakes his spirit with fears of sin. Now what should he do? He should welcome it, and say, O blessed Spirit, dost thou begin to cast me down to the dust for my sin, before I am cast to hell for my sin! What wilt thou have me to do! O humble me more. Give me not only an act of heaviness, but a spirit of heaviness? As she said of affliction, "I pray God this" "plaister may never cease cleaving, till healed." Now what do many men? Why either game it, or work it, or sleep it away. The young man will not so soon lose all his mirth: The man that has thought his estate good so long, will not believe it is so with him now. Or as Solomon speaks of God's hand, he grows weary of his chastisement, and so cast it off, and catcheth hold on Christ and comfort, and there stays, before the Spirit has done it.

5. If they dare not shake it off thus till the Spirit easeth, then they satisfy themselves with some hopes the Lord gives, and some taste of his sweetness, before they are satisfied with it, as those did, Heb. vi. 4, 5. And hence Psal. xc. 14. "O satisfy us with thy mercy, so shall we be glad all the days of our lives!" So satisfied, as to live upon it. As if you should ask a man, could you be contented it should be so, but they do not live upon it. As if you should ask a man, could you be content to be made king, and come from beggary? Yes; but he is left there, it is not so; and hence lives a beggar still. Men cannot live with-

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out their lusts. Yet saith Christ, "My flesh is meat indeed, and drink indeed," i. e. This gives real consolation, satisfaction indeed. And here many a Christian sinks, and goes up and down short of saving good.

3. Hence many walk in some desires which the Spirit has wrought, but to break through all difficulties, and follow the Lord indeed, and come to that they know they must indeed, this they will not do, but depart from Christ sorrowful, and hope the Lord will accept of them; and hence the Lord complains, Mal. i. 8. of this generation that had desires in their flocks, but lame ones. "Will thy king accept this?" And so all their work is overly and superficial by stinting the Spirit. Thus far you shall go but no farther. O beloved, this is the frame of a sincere heart, the Lord empties him, but he is never content that the work is done, but as his want made him beg before, so his taste makes him long more now, as Moses, to see more of the Lord's glory: as Paul, Phil. iii. 12, 13. O therefore when the Spirit comes, intreat it to go on and finish. And hence David begs, Psal. cxix. 132. "O the mercy that thou usest to shew to them that love thy name!" Why so? O David saw mercy to others, that sets God a work to do somewhat for them, work somewhat in them, but it is not such mercy. O beg for that mercy that humbled others, quickened others, that are now in glory; that, or no mercy Lord!

Quest. How shall I know whether the work is overly?

Ans. 1. If sudden and violent, it is usually overly. A picture long a drawing is exact, another soon done is lightly done. A man has leopard-spots, which in our garments cannot be washed out easily. God's thorough work, is seeking and searching. Hence violent sudden sorrows and joys and reformation which all were in the stony ground, proved unsound, Mat. xiii. 5.

2. God has thy time of trying thee, Mat. xiii. The seed was sown. Which now is good ground? Where is there fruit to be seen and ripeness of grace? Look upon persecution, if that doth not drive thee from Christ. If that doth not, see if the world doth not, which by a certain deceit and cozenage will befool you. I am perswaded, as Calvin is, that all the several trials of men are to shew them known to themselves and the world, that they be but counterfeits, and to make saints known to themselves the better. As Saul, he has a temptation only of a command, when he had nothing to cause him to stoop but it, yet he fell there. So it is with many others that God doth much for, he tries them, Rom. v. 3. "Tribulation works trial, and that hopes." Prov. xvi. 9. "If you would know whether it will hold weight, the trial will tell you. Look you there, and in special, if it drives to prayer, fear not.

CHAP. XX. SECT. I.
Wherein is given a more large and full account of that fulness of grace that is in Believers, as to the several parts thereof, and how the most glorious Hypocrites come short in all.

Use 3. **M**AKE therefore a narrow search whether you have this fulness of the Spirit or no.

Quest. *What is this fulness?*

Ans. When the Spirit comes in the room of those things which a man is full of now. For fulness or filling implies emptiness, and the removal of that.

Now there are six things every man is full of.

1. Sin.—2. Darknes.—3. Unbelief.—4. Satan.—5. Self.—6. World.

So there is answerably in every saint,

1. A fulness of humiliation for sin.
2. A fulness of illumination and revelation, in the room of darkness.
3. A fulness of faith, in the room of unbelief.
4. A fulness of the Spirit itself, in the room of Satan.
5. A fulness of sanctification in acting for God as their last end, in the room of self seeking.
6. A fulness of glory and consolation, instead of the world.
7. A fulness of humiliation under sin, opposite to fulness of sin.

For every hypocritical heart has commonly some humiliation and casting down, which is the first principle of all his profession, and hence can tell you of his miserable estate that once he lived in, and for which he was troubled, but it was never deep enough. For as there was before his terrifying, a full power, a fulness of the dominion of sin, his humiliation for sin, never reached, never came to that fulness or measure, so as to deliver the soul from that. For I do not account that true humiliation whereby a man's heart is rent, troubled and tormented with sin, but whereby it is rent from sin; not from the being, but from the power; not from the bondage of some, but yet from the power of all. For if rending with sin should be humiliation, then the devils should be more humbled than any. Then also a man may have too much of humiliation, and of God's Spirit. If rending from the being of all sin should be humiliation, then no man living should be sincerely humbled; unless we dream of an estate of perfection before it comes, and of the day of triumph in the time of warfare. If rending from the bondage of some sins should be humiliation, then a man might be truly humbled for sin, and yet under the power of it. And therefore look as in every one the Lord humbles, there was once a fulness of the reign and power of sin in the full strength of

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it; so that full measure of humiliation which the Lord works in his, it ever comes to that height, as to break that power down, Ehud-like, it not only wounds the flesh, but leaves the dagger in the heart of this tyrant; 2 Cor. x. 5. "The weapons of our warfare are mighty to cast down every thing that exalts itself."

If I should leave this point thus, I should but leave you as doubtful as you came, and so in the dark; therefore for the better clearing of this point, let me explain five things to you: the scope of which is to shew you, what I mean by sin, and the power of it, and that humiliation that removes it.

I. That besides the outward acts of sin, and inward lusts and breathings of sin, and the spiritual plagues with which God strikes men for sin, as blindness, hardness of heart, there is in every man living another sin, commonly called the sin of nature (as in the serpents, besides the spitting of poison, their nature is poisonous) which sin is generally believed and confessed but felt by few. This is called in scripture by the name of flesh, John iii. 3. "The law of the members, the old man." For as in men, there are actions, breathings, and the man himself: so here: which sin of nature is the de-ordination of the whole man, or a corrupt bent and set of the whole man against God: and it expresseth itself in two particulars; 1. In a constant departing from God in every action, civil and moral: like a man set out of his way, every step he goes is out; or like a clock out of frame, every stroke is false, Psal. lvi. 3. "The wicked go astray from the very womb." 2. In fierce, invincible, resisting and contradicting of God, when he has overtaken the soul to draw it home, and turn it back, Rom. viii. 7. We account it a doleful thing for Christ to bid the soul depart at the last day, that woe is past upon all the sons of men by this sin now; only with this difference, 1. They are forced to depart then, men willingly depart now, and hasten away in every thing from God as fast as they can. 2. They depart into fire,

fire, these to broken cisterns of creatures. I do 3. Believe they would not resist the Lord, if he should come to save them from separation then from him, this makes nature resist him now.

II. That this sin of nature is most properly only the reigning sin. The text is evident for it, Rom. vi. 12. "Let not sin reign, to obey it in the lusts thereof." There is 1. obedience, i. e. the outward acts, 2. Lusts, the inward breathings. 3. Sin itself where those lusts are seated. It has been a question, what a man's reigning master-sin is, and many discoveries have been made of particular sins, as that which riseth and awakeneth first in the morning with us, that which rides and labours a man upon the sabbath day, when the Lord or sin must ride in triumph; yet that is the misery of a carnal heart, that when he gives his beasts rest, yet such is sin's tyranny, he being sin's beast, that he shall then have no rest. Now if their meaning be, that some particular sin may be a reigning sin, or a man's personal reigning sin, then it is true, Judas loves his bag best, and Achitophel and Hamon their honour best, and Herod his whore most. But if they mean a man's natural reigning sin; the reigning sin then, it is not any particular sin so much as this. For no sin is able to reign over any man, but by commission and power from this. As the weeds can never grow tall, but by virtue of their soil where they grow, Matth. xv. 19. All the boughs flourish by virtue of the root whence they grow. And hence we shall see, let satan sow his seeds of pride or lust or passion in a man whose nature is changed, it is impossible they should come to any perfection there; but they will die away within a time, because the heart of the soul is gone, and power of sin removed; and hence also it comes to pass, that a man's master-sin may be changed; those sins that are his master-sins in his youth, are not in his old age; those that are not at one time, in one place, are not in another. Now there could never be such change in govern-
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ors and vice-roys, unless there were some great king, that sets up one, and pulls down another, *satis pro imperio*; this is therefore the reigning sin, which has taken possession of every part, which has its hand in every act, which pulls down one sin and sets up another under it, which gives strength to every sin that has any, which fights it out till the last: this is I say the reigning sin; hence think not that when the reigning sin is down, when your personal sins are destroyed, though it be with a most sudden and fearful destruction, *the soul is thus only struck, but they only slay the*

III. That when the Spirit of God humbles the soul indeed, he strikes the head, and wounds the heart of this sin; he doth not only cut off some limbs of it, not only bind it, but slay it of its life and power, and hat as it is with some men, they may have many pains, gripes, diseases, yet live and recover again, but the pangs are not so strong as to separate soul and body, for then the man is gone: So a carnal heart he may be troubled, and have many gripes of conscience, and apply the promise, "come to me you that be weary," and so he may find rest, and as he recovers his peace, his sin recovers its strength; but when the pangs are so strong as separate body and soul, sin of nature which has lived there; now the man dies, now the soul falls down indeed. Now this effectual humiliation carries the soul unto Christ, and hence Acts xxvi. 18. "Turned from the power of satan to God," Col. i. 13. "He has delivered us from the power of darkness." And hence Gal. v. 24. "They that be in Christ have crucified the flesh, as well as the affections and lusts." For if the Lord should only humble a man for the sins of a wicked life, and some sins in the heart, the Lord should only bruise satan's heel, but never strike his head; the Lord should slay Amalekites, but spare the Agags; it is true, the Lord usually at first conversion sets one sin upon the soul that brings to mind many other, and the Lord

humbles for them, and here the soul is apt to rest as many do; but when the Lord comes indeed to work, he cuts thus deep as now I speak, 1 Cor. xv. It is said, "The Lord must reign till all his enemies are put under his feet." Look therefore as this sin is the greatest enemy Christ hath, so if he reigns in heaven, he will be sure above all other sins, to strike the head of this, and dethrone this; and we shall find that there may be deep terrors upon the falsehearted virgins, but they only assault the soul; so on saints, but Christ then strikes at the sin, and saves the soul, Isa. lviii. 16; 17. And this I add, there may be a great power of Christ put forth to humble the soul, but mens hearts resist this; and even Pharaoh was humbled, but it is never slaying, unless it strike the very power and throne of sin, and so this sin; and now the soul is humbled indeed.

IV. That no unregenerate man never had such a measure of humiliation, as ascended to, and ended in this, though he may have all that humiliation which is precedent unto this. As, first, some few, and then many of the sins of their lives upon them; so as they may feel the most intolerable burden of them; not only to stand convinced they are most grievous sinners, but to shed many tears; nay, to be sore troubled and distressed, O the heavy wrath that lies upon my soul! Thus Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. And hence, many make heavy complaints, O the Lord hears me not! "Send for Moses," saith Pharaoh; "My sins are greater than I can bear," saith Cain. Nay, not only so, but they may feel more terrors than many of the saints; as the damned now; for the Lord lays this burden upon his people's backs in measure, but the Lord empties out the whole sack upon them, and the ground of this is but the sting of sin, or the gnawings of particular sins in the conscience, not the burden of the sin of nature as yet.

2. You will say, these fell from God, never looked to Christ, nor left their sin; but I have done so. I have seen the mercy of God in the gospel, the Lord Jesus has been revealed there, and I have seen sin, I must part with my sin, if ever I have him, and so I have. And this you may have, you may see an excellency in Christ, and be so affected with hope of his mercy, and melt at the thoughts of his love, as to cast off all outward evils that thou hast, or the world lives in, 2 Peter ii. 20. So that thou mayst escape these, by coming to him to remove them, and by seeing that else thou shalt have none of him; and hence hated, thou mayest be of the world. The reason is, Christ has only washed thy skin, but never changed thy nature as yet, so that you may thank God my conscience is clear.

3. You may have not only outward acts, but for a time inward lusts quenched, that a man has no mind nor heart to any sinful way, nor to the dearest sins he has lived in, whilst horror lies upon him. As in Judas, when God did heat his conscience, his lust, after his bag was gone, he had more mind to an halter; and hence throws away his pieces of silver, and innocent blood lies heavy. O the mercy of a Christ that I have slighted! He thought he might have his money and Christ escaped with his life, and his sin pardoned afterward. And hence it is said, Matth. xxvii. 3. "When he saw he was condemned, he repented," and as a man not worthy to live in his own thoughts, "he goes and hangs himself." It is with the soul as with water, all the cold may be gone, but the native principle of cold remain still. You may remove the burning of lusts, not the blackness of nature, from a carnal heart, and the ground holds, nature is not changed. This I say, an unregenerate man may have but yet never find this change of nature, where the power of sin lies: change of conscience from security to terror, change of life from profaneness, and civility,
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and fashions of the world, to escape pollutions thereof; change of lusts, nay, quenching them for a time; but the nature is never changed in the best hypocrite "that ever was. As 2 Peter ii. 19, 20. "They were "washed," but never from their swinish nature; and here they ever fail, Prov. xxx. 12. "There is a generation clean in their own eyes, yet not washed from "their own filthiness," 2 Tim. 2. 18, 19, 20, 21. Alexander fell, and Hymeneus fell; they talked of the glorious estate of saints, and that here was all the resurrection that is to be expected; and it seems it was such a fall of such persons that many stumbled, and said, How shall we know who are the Lord's? doubtless we may fall. No, "the "foundation remains sure, and the Lord knows who "are his." They were none of his all that time, "and "let all that profess Christ depart from iniquity, for he "that purgeth himself shall be a vessel of honour." And therefore read through all the Scripture, constantly never any hypocrites but they had this brand, Mat. vii. 23. "You workers of iniquity." Herod and Judas had their haunts, &c. And Rom. i. and ii. The apostle shews that all were under sin. He may in every thing else be humbled, for all the humiliation besides this strengthens sin in its kingdom, and binds a man faster under the dominion of it. And hence such men are more hard to be convinced than men that were never cast down at all.

But this he never finds, for if he should, then,

1. A graceless heart might partake of the greatest benefit of the covenant of grace, and love of God. For Rom. xi. 26. "This is my covenant, to take a "way their sin." For to subdue sin is greater loved than to conquer devils, death, and hell, Isa. xi. 6. It is turning lions into lambs.

2. Then an unregenerate man may partake of the last end of all the sufferings and sorrows of Christ, which is "to save his people from their sin." And

hence, John i. 29. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," 1 John iii. 5. 8. "Christ came to destroy the works of the devil." This therefore he ever falls short of. He that hath found this easy, and accounts this work common, never had it yet.

Quest. How may a Christian know when the Lord hath changed his nature, and taken down the power of his sin?

Ans. It might suffice to evidence this against all gain-sayers, that thus it is, and so to know it by the Spirit's witness, which shews us the things freely given of God, who to save the Lord a trying another day, tries us now, and makes known these hidden works. Especially seeing some divines think, that as the first Adam conveyed this sin of nature, I not knowing; so the second Adam doth also remove this by an immediate stroke, I conceive it is so also, but not only by it. And therefore take two evidences now.

1. Wherever this is done, that soul doth not only see this sin; for so an unregenerate Paul did, Rom. vii. 9. where "sin revived," &c. And the word is a "divider of joints and marrow." Nor do they only feel this as an evil, and so be much troubled with it, but when the Lord makes the dejected soul feel it as its greatest evil, so long as it remains in its being; (as it will) worse than death, than hell, than all afflictions, and miseries. It is not a particular sin, but this that he feels thus. You will say, this is a high pitch. I say, consider if any man was ever humbled under sin, but he that felt sin as it is. For if I feel it not as it is, I am deceived. Now, it is the greatest evil; to depart from a living God is worse than for soul and body and all creatures to depart from me. To make God miserable is worse than for all creatures ever to be made so, and sin in its tendency doth so, being a cross to his will, Isa. i. 24.

Hence

Hence he that feels it indeed, feels it so; the beginning of which is a sorrow and mourning after God, that it might be so, Isa. lxiii. 17. "Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?" But thus it is indeed, Rom. vii. 24. And when it is thus, it will hold thus till death, while the cause remains; nay the more life and love, the more tender it grows; setting aside some careless fits. And hence its greatest joy is to think of the time it shall be forever holy. And hence accounts no such mercy as to be set at liberty to live to God indeed. A graceless heart sees and fears it, and cries out of himself for it; but stay a while, and he loseth his tenderness, either because he cannot part with it, or because of Christ, he looks now to him, or because he hath now some sprinkling of the Spirit, nature is eased thereby, and he is quieted; and hence never any carnal heart, but some root of bitterness did grow up at last in this soil. Hence ordinances profit not, because feeling is lost. But the soul thus feeling it, beholding the holiness of God and love of Christ, and its constant withdrawals, resistings, O it cuts deep!

2. Then the nature is changed, when the conscience being still and quiet, and the soul assured of the Lord's love, yet nothing gives the heart quiet till it is contiguous to God in Christ to enjoy him, in his holiness, and in the love and delight of his whole will. For this is a certain rule, if the nature be not changed, if conscience be but once quieted with the sense of God's love, and affected with it, and has not God indeed, nor his work to quiet it, it will fall to lusting after creatures and live upon them, and feed the heart there. For as it is impossible for a man to live, or to be without provision, so the world being provision for the flesh, meat, drink, sleep, and these lawful things, there it doth and will lie quiet without God. But now where the nature is changed, and there is another nature, there is something else provided for

it to live on, and that is the Lord and his will. As Christ said, "It is my meat and drink to do his will." And Rom. vii. 22. "I delight in the law of God in "the inner man." There was somewhat that loathed it, but there was somewhat else delighted in it, and there lies its life, and though the heart would rest and give over sometimes, yet it is a law of the mind that the soul has, he can have no rest, Rom. viii. 5. And therefore take a child of God, let him have meat, drink, sleep, blessing in his calling, preach, pray, and have honour, yet he will constantly come home to the Lord mourning. What, doth all this do me good? When I rise up, lie down, eat, drink and pray, and do all without him! An untuned heart all this while. The world stands between him and the Lord all this while, but this doth not. Many a sincere heart has heavy complaints, and many doubts, because it is not thus; this rather is an evidence of peace, than God's war against it. It is an old rule, he that can live in heaven, shall; and there is nothing but a God to suck in, and breath out, and live unto. Is this thy element now?

O consider and examine yourselves here you poor faints, that you may be comforted. Others of you, if now you do not, the Lord Jesus will another day, and bring these secret things of darkness to light. If thou findest this was never yet done, know it, all thy tears, and fears, and prayers have been in vain; and under the power of sin and satan thou still art, thro' the fierce wrath of God against thee: And there I leave thee till the Lord find thee out.

S E C T. II.

II. **A** Fulness of illumination in the room of darkness. But let it be first noted that I speak not here of revelations of future events. When virgin-churches shall fall a-dreaming, it is a sign they fall asleeping.

Nor

Nor of revelation of new doctrines, nor yet of the love of Christ and assurance thereof; but of the person of Christ, a work common to all the elect, and not peculiar to some; for Christ may not appear in his promise of love for a time to a sincere heart, yet this is then wrought. I shall therefore express my thoughts herein in four conclusions.

Concl. 1. That all unregenerate men are under the power of darkness, of ignorance, Eph. v. 8. "You were darkness" in the abstract, Eph. iv. 18. So that "they cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Especially the Lord Jesus; for the knowledge of him is above nature, not only corrupted, but pure nature. Nay, though the Lord gives the best and clearest means of revealing himself, yet they cannot see, John i. 5. "Light shined in darkness, and it comprehended him not," no more than he whose vivifying faculty is lost, when the sun shines round about him. Nay, that light which is in them is darkness, Matth. vi. 23. And then how great is that darkness? For many men might have known Christ, but that they thought they did know him before, and so are delivered up in these chains of darkness to the prince of darkness, but are like wilderness shrubs, shall never see when good comes. Ministers (as Christ did) may mourn over them, but can never help them until the Lord pull off their scales. For they please themselves in darkness, and love it more than light, and are not as Paul, praying and mourning under the scales that are upon their eyes.

Concl. 2. That there is a state of light to which God calls his people only; or rather, that there is a spirit of light, illumination or revelation let into the mind, which is peculiar to the beloved of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 9. As of other things, so especially of the Lord Jesus, 2 Cor. iv. 4, 5, 6. And it is so glorious a work that Christ himself admires the Father, and stands in

a ravishment at it, Mat. xi. 25. To babes, incapable of all others of knowledge; yet to them doth the Lord reveal some things that the wisest in the world never knew. I do believe that the greatest scholar that ever lived, never had one such thought or apprehension of the Lord and the things of the Lord, as the saints have. And hence Christ professeth, O "blessed are your eyes that they see;" and themselves bless him, and fall a wondering many times, "Lord why dost thou manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?" And therefore it is an injury to the grace of God, to make precious things common, and all the work of the Spirit on the understanding to be common to reprobates, and to say, the difference lies only in the work of the Spirit upon the will, John vi. 45. "He that has heard and learned of the Father, comes to me." If the learning of the Father be common to a reprobate, then either they may come to Christ, which is there denied, or Christ's promise is false, for then a carnal heart may bear and learn of the Father, and never come to Christ.

Conc. 3. That notwithstanding it is thus with them, yet foolish virgins may have some light in their lamps, some sight and knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is said we live in days of light, and so indeed we do, but as the Lord said to them that had seen his miracles, "yet the Lord had not given them eyes to see to this day;" they were enlightened, yet fell, Heb. vi. 4. I shall therefore speak not of the revelation of all the word, but of Christ the end of it, and the knowledge of whom comprehends all the rest.

1. There is a knowledge of Christ in many a man which is begot by common fame, and human private instruction, which men hearing from credible men, conceive of and believe; as that Christ is the saviour of the world, is come, is dead, is risen, is at God's right hand, that in him God's justice and mercy is reconciled, that there is mercy with him for the great-
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est of all sinners, &c. And according as men are more or less instructed; so do men conceive and believe. But now this knowledge is but traditional, and begot by common fame and human report, like Herods', that heard many things of Christ, and yet indeed despised him. The Lord I know doth make use of this to cause the soul to come to further sight of him, as in the Queen of Sheba, but it is far enough off from giving any saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus; and hence John i. 46. when they had been with Christ, they do not wish them to rest in the report, but come and see; so you hear of these things, but come and see; these things. You have learned them from man, come unto the Lord that he may teach them; and hence we shall see many of the people of God that have been put to a question of all things that ever they learned, and learned them over again; as, whether there be a Christ or no, &c. And they never saw these things indeed, until the Lord taught them a second time; hence therefore those that have been thus trained up, and have been troubled and comforted by some conceived promises of Christ, but never saw any more of his person, than what you have learned before; "Your eyes are closed up to this day."

2. If any man should see and behold Christ really, immediately, this is not the saving knowledge of him. I know the saints do know Christ as if immediately present, they are not strangers by their distance, if others have seen him more immediately I will not dispute it, but if they have seen the Lord Jesus as immediately as if here on earth, yet Capernaum, saw him so; nay, some of them were disciples for a time, and followed him, John vi. and yet the Lord was hid from their eyes; nay all the world shall see him in his glory which shall amaze them, and yet this is far short of the saving knowledge of him, which the Lord doth communicate to the elect.

So

So that though you see the Lord so really as that you become familiar with him, yet Luke xiii. 26. "Lord, have we not eat and drunk," &c. And so perish.

3. A man may see the Lord in his wonderful works, and glorious kingdom and government, and yet not know him savingly, wondrous deliverances, preservations of himself, and of God's people, dreadful destruction of enemies, such as they cannot but say, "This is the finger of the Lord," and yet know not, Deut. xxix. 1, 2, 3, 4. And hence John xv. 24. and hence men think such things are done, and shall I ever be vile again, yet they become as bad as ever.

4. He may see the Lord Jesus yet more clearly by the letter of the scripture, which though it brings to the saving knowledge of Christ, yet to see the Lord Jesus no otherwise than by the strength of fancy and understanding, from thence is no saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and hence Rom. xvi. 26. the mystery of the gospel was hid from the Jews, but now it is revealed to all nations; literally, to all where it comes, savingly to some few. For between the saving knowledge of Christ in the gospel, and palpable ignorance of him in the gospel, there is his middle knowledge which is literal, whereby a man doth see, "yet in seeing, sees not," Isa. vi. 9. which is the state of a church which has been long trained up under good means: and hence we shall see many men of great learning have been able to write volumes of the mystery of Christ, and yet in "seeing never saw."

5. There may be in a false heart a strange knowledge of Christ without scriptures, which may ravish a man's deluded heart strangely, which is usually the first temptation of the virgin-churches, that are of much knowledge, and little love, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3, 4. Wherein satan doth not seek to pull away men to forsake the gospel, but from the simplicity of the gospel, hence

“Repent, and believe, and be saved;” for faith he, “Satan is transformed into an angel of light:” and hence we have heard that some have heard voices, some have seen the very blood of Christ dropping on them, and his wounds in his side, some have seen a great light shining in the chamber, some wonderfully affected with their dreams, some in great distress, have had inward witness, “thy sins are forgiven;” and hence such liberty and joy that they are ready to leap up and down the chamber. O adulterous generation! This is natural and usual with men, they would earnestly see Jesus, and have him present to give them peace; and hence papists have his image; and hence Christ gives the sacrament to shew himself as familiarly as can be. Hence, Thomas would not believe, “unless he might put his finger in his side,” and the Lord tendered him, yet pronounced “them blessed that have not seen, and yet believed,” John xx. 29. So I say, *e contra*, Woe to them that have no other manifested Christ, but such a one. Little do you think what wrong you do to Christ; for you do as much as in you lies to eclipse all his glory at the last day, as the wicked by their sins eclipse his glory at this day, 2 Thess. i. 10. “He shall be admired in all that believe.” Why? Because your testimony was believed; that faith which closeth with, and sees Christ in a testimony, is that whereby Jesus shall be admired at the world’s end.

Concl. 4. That the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ is this, whereby the soul being sensible of his ignorance of Jesus, beholds such a glory in Christ’s person, as that he esteems him in all his glory, as his present, greatest, and only good. I will take this in pieces.

1. I say that soul which has truly and savingly seen the Lord Jesus, has been made sensible of his ignorance of him; I see him not, I have heard of him, and read of him, and taken his name into

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my mouth, and professed him ; and I believe others see him, and blessed are their eyes, but I see him not, John ix. 26, 37 39. " For judgment am I come in. " to this world : " and look as all the increase of the knowledge of Christ comes in by this door, so the beginning of it, and therefore those that have been cast down and heard of Christ a Saviour, but never felt their ignorance of him before they have apprehended him, their light is darkness, and their knowledge full of delusion, and idolatrous.

2. It beholds a glory in Christ's person ; for before the Lord reveals his Son to any, look what he was to the Jews he is to every man, Isa. liii. 2, 3. " He is rejected and despised of men ; " nothing so mean as Christ, every vanity preferred above him, and men can do no other, because they see not his glory and beauty, 1 Cor. ii. 8. " If they had known, " &c. Therefore the Lord reveals his hidden glory to them, such as never entered into their hearts before, or into the minds of other men, which though others may talk of, yet they cannot see it in that manner as they do ; it is called therefore marvellous light which he doth reveal, when the soul hath been viewing its own shame and filth, when all the graces and glory is withered, Isa. xl. 6. then the glory of Christ is revealed ; one every way so fit and suitable to them, according to all their wants and woes, by some sermon or other, which when the soul doth see, it usually fills the head, and heart, and eyes with tears. O that I have despised him so glorious ! Acts ii. 36, 37. 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6. If the soul should not feel its ignorance of him, it would never esteem the sight of him, but now it doth thus, and now that glory is revealed, John i. 14. " We beheld his glory as the glory of " the only begotten Son. " In every truth there is a glory which men see not, and this is called in scripture, " the finding of the pearl, " Matth. xiii. 45.

III. He so beholds him in his glory, as that he now esteem

esteem of him in all his glory. For a Balaam may see the glory of the tents of Israel, and the star of Jacob, but they esteem not of him in all his glory. The damned in hell see a glory in Christ, else they would never grieve for the loss of him, but it is only in regard of something in Christ, delivering faints from sorrows they feel. Nay many reprobates under a lively ministry, shall see some glory in Christ and in faints, to think them the happy men, yet not esteem of him in all his glory; but it is otherwise here. The Lord ariseth as the sun upon the earth, which makes all things that have any glory to appear therein, and it puts a glory on every thing that was hid before. So Christ puts a glory on every thing of himself: So that,

1. The soul sees a glory in the grace of Christ, John i. 14. For the glory of Christ's person is not seen without these excellencies, Luke i. 46. "My soul magnifies the Lord."

2. A glory in the holiness of Christ, Isa. vi. 3. Especially to consider, it is in him to make me holy, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

3. A glory in his covenant and promises, Psal. lxxv. 1, 2. O that all those promises might be made good to me! This is all my desire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

4. A glory in the government and commands and will of Christ. O if once I could in every thing give content to his heart! Psal. xix. 10. That the soul had rather lose all than cross his will in a small thing, seeing a glory in the least truth, in casting off a ceremony, &c. Zach. vi. 13.

5. A glory in all the ordinances of Christ. "O how amiable are thy tabernacles O God!" O the fellowship of faints! O the peace on sabbaths!

6. A glory in all his carriage. Let him bless me with outward estate, though but a little. This is the allowance that Christ in glory provides for me. Let him threaten me, "Good is the word of the Lord." Let him desert me, his anger is love! O that is glori-

ous! Let him take all from me, reproach me, " Mo. " ses esteems Christ's reproach greater riches than " Egypt," which is our estate here. It sees a glory in all Christ's ways, and quiets itself here, " it is the " Lord," as Eli said. Thus saints see and esteem of Christ in all his glory, and we shall find a false heart even fall short here, a sincere heart never, but commonly it is so taken up with it, that if you ask, suppose you should have all grace, holiness, promises of Christ, &c. Would not this be mercy? Yes, enough: I should then boast in him, and bless him forever. And hence Christ is called, Luke ii. 33. " the " glory of Israel," because they so esteem him. And Isa. xxviii. 5. " In that day the Lord shall be a " dem of glory." Others may in horror prize Christ above the world, but it is only to ease them.

IV. I add, he esteems him thus.

1. As his present good; so that if the Lord doth withdraw or deny himself, now unto him nothing in this world can for the present quiet him, Jer. l. 4, 5. Hence those in their judgments acknowledge Christ the greatest good, and when they are dying, and see he will so at the last day, yet now for the present a little more liberty in sin, sloth, lust, honour, gain, lots, large accommodations are better. You never saw him. O vile world! the Lord will one day condemn thee out of thine own mouth; thy own will was more dear to thee than his; this world's ease better than his peace, &c. When you lie on your death beds, you esteem him then. Why? Because he serves your turn then: hence before you did not.

2. As the greatest good, Deut. xxxiii. 26. Jer. x. 7. Hence those that see some good in Christ and desire him, and offer fair for him, but prize him not as the greatest good: and hence with the young man, though content to part with somewhat, not with all, they will cast their rags down at Christ's feet and intreat him to take away their sins; but will not cast their

their crowns down, the dearest things they have : and hence the thorny-ground professors ever fall away. The good things of this world which they forsook in time of persecution, were dearer than Christ, and hence they fall away. It is a dishonour to a king to be valued as other men are, Zach. xi. 12, 13.

3. As the only good, Isa. xxiv. 23. "The sun shall be confounded," &c. And though other things may steal into their hearts for a time, yet they recover themselves ; this is the one thing, Psal. xxvii. 4. that they beg in this life. And hence do fall short.

1. Those that esteem Christ as men do merchandise; they would fain have it, but are loath to bring it. Men may esteem Christ, as they think, the only good; but herein their falseness appears, that they neglect means to it, because they have some good else to quiet them. And here is condemned all lazy profession.

2. Those that would have Christ, and esteem him highly, and use means for him diligently, but they must have Christ, and world, and lust, and ease likewise : Christ to quiet their consciences, and the world their hearts ; Christ to rest on, when their duties fail them, and the world to rest in, when the consolations of Christ are denied unto them. "The land is good, go up and possess it."

Objection. 1. But do the saints come to this pitch ?

Answer. 2 Cor. iv. 3. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that be lost." Who are those from whom Christ is hid ? When is he hid ? When his glory is hid. I know saints may feel a want of, and mourn for it, but it will appear if they are the Lord's at some time. Nay, this they will find, some and much contempt remaining which they oppose, yet this is here, and at parting times it is seen.

Objection 2. But saints cannot know this.

Answer.

Answer. Yes, (as well as they can know their contempt) by means of God's Spirit, he that is carried from one contrary to another shall know it.

Objection 3. But hypocrites may attain to this.

Answer 1. Then the gospel may be revealed to an hypocrite, and to them that are lost.

Upon this call the whole soul comes out of itself to Christ; for if a man could climb the clouds, and unlock the doors of heaven, and come Elias-like in his body to Christ, he might miss of Christ, as well as those that came and followed Christ for a time with their bodies while he lived on the earth; a man may come to Christ with half his soul or heart, there may be some hope, and some desires, some love, and some cleaving to him, and choice of him really, inwardly, and yet not savingly, because the whole soul is not here come, but half of it, James i. 7, 8. Now the whole soul then comes, when all the affections and will take their flight to the Lord, and fasten there. When all the affections are gathered from all other things and changed, and so they come to, and embrace the Lord; so that hope waits only here, when will the Lord pity me? Desires that were set on a thousand things before, all long after him, love only tasteth him; the Lord letting in some sight of the freeness of mercy, hope looks out hither; the Lord shewing the want, and the way to it, desire breaks down stone-walls, and all means, and the difficulty of them, to have him: the Lord letting the soul taste the sweetness of Jesus and his grace, the soul joys, and love embraceth, and the will fosters; a carnal heart desires, loves, joys in other things, and the Lord also, and so hath a false heart. But the whole heart comes hither, and when it is here, thinks one heart too little, nay one life, one soul, and when any part of the affections are left any where else, then the soul mourns, hates that bondage, is ashamed of it, &c. So that the stream of the whole soul runs now hither, Psa. cxix. 2. Jer. iii. 10. Psa. xlv. 10. So it is with

with the soul, as with them when they were to come out of Egypt, they would not leave child, nor hoof behind, lest there should be any occasion of return; as it is with the soul departed from the body, it only minds the Lord, it hath taken leave of all, so by faith the whole soul leaves all, and comes to the Lord; otherwise the soul is not come to Christ, but reacheth after Christ; like men that waded after the ark, but perished in the waters: Their arms are not long enough, their desires and love are not long enough to reach Christ, the bent and stream of the soul is set and runs here. It is with the soul, as it is with two rivers, both run with all their strength to the sea, but the great river is bigger, and runs faster, yet the other's stream is wholly carried thither. So some men may be more full of faith than others, yet both run to the sea, and as rivers, they run in their circles, this way and that way, and are sometimes dammed up, yet end there: So the souls of all saints run to this and the other creature, yet they end in the Lord at last. As Peter and John that ran to the sepulchre, though one out-ran the other, yet they came both to the Lord at last; when both of them had for a time forsook him, though all the world draw the soul back, it cannot live without the Lord; nay, though the Lord beat away the soul from him, yet it follows after him.

It is to the Lord for himself; for John vi. some came to Christ for loaves, and could have been glad if Christ had been king for it, but did not care for himself: and hence ver. xxvii. he points and turns them to himself; some came to him for higher ends, therefore were his disciples, that is, for life from him. But "his flesh and blood, or else you die," it was a hard saying, they could not understand nor see what that meant, and hence forsook him, but when they come and receive him himself; now life is indeed theirs.

So that it is Christ's person that this faith first pitcheth

eth on, as it is in marriage, and those that come for this, were never sent away. Now the soul is truly come to him for himself: 1. When himself gives rest to the soul in the want of all things, Heb. iv. 3. If friends, protection, strength, life, glory be wanting, yet having him, in him I have all these; when all is sold away, not the treasure only, but the field contents him: For it looks on this, as better than heaven, than glory, it comforts the soul that the Lord himself should be mine. 2. The soul that taketh him, it is not only to make boast of him, as Capernaum had him, nor to cover sloth, and sin, and delusion by him: I have Christ, and I have no more to care for, &c. but to live on him, John vi. 57. "He that eateth me, shall live by me." Phil. iii. 9, 10. A man takes not Christ as medicine to ease him; nor as stately hangings to adorn him, but as bread to receive life from him. For many receive Christ, rest they do upon him, and rest they say in him, but they do not suck any good from him, nay before they had any Christ or assurance of him they were better than now. You have nothing to do with the Lord Jesus, you are out of your place. As in Jotham's parable, the olive and vine would not be pulled out of their places, to be set on the tops of other's trees, as kings; lest they lose their fatness and sweetness: So since you have closed with Christ, you have lost your fatness and sweetness that once you had, you are now out of your place, go to your horrors and sorrows again, till the Lord so give himself to you as that you may receive life from him.

Quest. 3. But must all come thus to Christ with their whole soul, will not part of the price serve?

Ans. No, the whole soul must come, and cannot but come.

1. In regard of the jealousy of God; who is like a jealous husband, can bear with many weaknesses, but will have the whole heart; and they that do not, shall

shall be destroyed for spiritual whoredom, Psal. lxxiii.
27. He should dishonour Christ else, to sell him so cheap.

2. In regard of the excellency of Christ: the Lord draws the soul by the revelation of him, Rom. i. 16, 17. Isa. lv. 3, 4. Now look as men in this world, when they see a seeming good, their whole soul is over-powered to be drawn after it. So here, when such an object is seen, especially the soul having been at his sepulchre weeping, as iron never stirs till the loadstone comes, and then it makes to that only, not to things touched with it; for as "we love him because he loved us first," so Christ loving the soul with all his heart, and his whole heart set upon him, the whole soul is, *e contra*, set on Christ.

3. In regard else a man can receive nothing from the Lord, Jer. xxix. 12, 13. As it is with conduit-pipes, let them be laid, but not reach the conduit head, no water can come to that family; so here: and this is the reason why men live, and pray, and receive nothing, their hearts reach not hither: Men's hearts reach but half way to Christ: Tell me else, did you ever not receive?

5. Because else it is indeed no coming to him, but a leaning on him or toward him. So as it is with trees, if not cut off quite, or not pulled up quite by the roots, they cannot be set in another orchard; if the tree be left with never so little twigs in the ground, so here: Nay, the Lord accounts this worse than if a man had not come at all, Jer. iii. 10. The Lord abhors a double heart, that Judas-like forsakes all for the Lord, but then loves the Lord and the bag too. You are not the Lord's. As it was with that man that quarrelled about the tree, it leaned over the pales, but the root being found to be there, his it was; so though he lean on Christ, he is none of his.

Quest. 4. But do all saints come to this measure?

Ans. Ponder these grounds else.

Objection. But are not your hearts partly carnal, and so close with the creature?

Answer. True; but yet,

1. So far as it is carnal it is lamented heavily; so that they grow not there, but are dying, withering daily, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. When a man's affections grow out of the world, and there is no fear nor sorrow, in this respect now, no Christ is there.

2. The bent and bias of the soul carries the whole soul hither. For I would not judge of this so much by sudden pangs, as by an inward bent; for the whole soul in affectionate expressions and actions may be carried unto Christ, but being without this bent and change of affections, it is unsound, as in Gideon, they would on a hurry make him king: he would not: he knew it was a sudden pang which would die. And the reason is, the true turn of the whole soul is not by turning old affections upon another object, but changing them first by this bent, and so turning them. For a carnal heart may have the first, as the same eye may see the sun and a dunghill, and the eye not changed; so here. Now when the whole soul is set here, it is never at rest till here.

Question 5. But may not hypocrites come to this?

Answer 1. Then they may be blessed, Psal. cxix. 2.

2. Then they shall never be cast off from Christ, John vi. 37.

3. Then they may partake of that which the Lord only looks for. For why is the Lord angry? The heart is gone from him. Why is the ministry ordained, but to win the whole heart to him? John iii. 19, 20, 21. O therefore consider whether it hath been thus with you or no! If not, woe to you! O be very careful here! It is a thousand to one if some part of your heart be not fixed elsewhere. If Christ

were

were at judgment, and should say, 'Come ye blessed:' How glad would ye be? O he saith now, come and take myself.

S E C T. IV.

IV. Fulness of the Spirit itself in the room of Satan.

I SHALL not speak here either concerning that fulness of the Spirit in extraordinary gifts, spoken of frequently in the Acts; nor yet of that fulness of the Spirit which some Christians that the Lord sets apart to do and suffer more for him shall receive more than others. For John xiv. 17. the disciples had the Spirit, and yet Christ promises to send them the Spirit. And Stephen was a man "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," Acts vi. 8. And Barnabas Acts xi. 14. "was a good man full of faith and the Holy Ghost." But I shall speak of that Spirit which is in every believer, without which we are not Christ's, Rom. viii. 9. And this is that Spirit which is opposite to the evil spirit, the prince of darkness, which possesseth with craft and power all the souls of the sons of men, who doth not only encamp about men, 1 Peter v. 7, 8. nor only "work within them," Eph. i. 2, 3, but he inhabiteth and dwelleth in men. He doth not only take men captives, 2 Tim. ii. 26. but he dwells in and possesseth the souls of his captives, Luke xi. 21. And though he doth depart for a time, yet, ver. 26. "They return and dwell there." Now in the room of this, comes God's Spirit, who ver. 22. is said to be stronger than Satan, which cannot be meant but of Christ's Spirit: That as it is with a man whose heart it turned from the Lord, he is not left only to be carried by the

power of his sin, but by the power of satan also. So when the whole soul is turned unto him, the Lord leaves not the soul to be carried along by the power of his own grace or faith, but the Spirit itself fills and acts that soul. And as the soul was carried by the mighty power of satan before, it is now carried by the Almighty power of the Spirit itself, hence 1 Pet. i. 5. 'Kept by the mighty power of God through faith.' And hence Acts xxvi. 18. "Turned from the power of satan," not to duties, but to God himself, *i. e.* the Spirit of God, and so to close with him.

Question. What is this Spirit which the saints have?

Answer. I shall express myself in these three conclusions.

Concl. 1. That if Adam had stood, he and all his posterity should have had that power and presence, and constant assistance of the Spirit of God, as that they should never have fallen, nor have been able to fall in respect of the assistance of the Spirit. He should have been green all the year long, his blossom should not have been blasted, his fruit should never have withered. And the ground is the rule of justice; for if he falling, all his posterity are forsaken of God, and under the reign of sin, and death and satan, Rom. v. 18, 21. Then he standing, all his posterity should have had the everlasting presence of God, and should have been under the reign of the Spirit of grace and life. Thus also the covenant ran, "do and live."

Concl. 2. That the Lord Jesus the second Adam, standing and rising in the room of all his people, hence he doth convey and propagate to all his posterity the immutable and constant assistance and presence of his Spirit, whereby being once begotten of him, and called to him, they never afterward depart from him. And though weak in themselves, yet assisted by the Spirit, do not, cannot depart wickedly again. The Lord Jesus having stood, they cannot fall,

fall, because by virtue of his standing they have this presence of the Holy Ghost, John xiv. 19. "Because I live, you shall live also." John vi. 57. "As the living Father sent me, and I live by him," &c. Christ standing next to the Father, lives by him; we standing next to Christ, live as infallibly by him. And I say the ground is Christ's standing. For though there be many reasons why the saints can never fall from Christ, as the Spirit of grace, covenant of grace, intercession of Christ, yet the main ground is Christ's standing, without the least fall from the fulfilling of the first covenant, which we having the first moment of believing kept in Christ, hence the Spirit is given, and the covenant of grace, of strength. And hence Rom. v. 21. and verse 17, 18. And hence the Spirit is said to dwell in believers, Rom. viii. 11. And we are the temples of the Spirit, whether he dwell in them in his person personally, the well is here deep, but he dwells in them so as he never ceaseth assisting of them, so that they cannot depart from the Lord again; hence Isa. lix. 21. "My Spirit shall not depart from thy seed." John xiv. it is called "the Spirit that abides forever." It binds the soul to the Lord, and keeps it so forever: Never suffers that love knot to be untied again. When the soul is weak, the Spirit helps him; when careless of itself, the Spirit keeps him, though the soul offers to run from the Lord, yet this Spirit follows him; though he grieves the Spirit, yet this Spirit still keeps his own house, will not depart from him; and so not suffer the soul to depart from the Lord. And this is the reason why the saints never fall from the Lord, though they have weak grace, poor beginnings, many sins, and Adam stood not, though with the perfect image of God upon him, because he had not this Spirit yet given; though he had the Spirit of God, yet not this Spirit, which some call the Spirit of adoption given to him, because he had not fulfilled the first covenant, which we in Christ have,

have, which is not only the ground of our never falling, but of assurance we shall never fall. For what breaks a man's peace after faith? Apparition of sin in the conscience: What makes that terrible? The law. Now when I see in Christ, I have kept all things in the law, not only the cry and accusations of the law and sin are stilled, but also there ariseth a holy boldness and confidence and joy, even before the face of an angry God, Eph. iii. 12. And as soul and body are ever knit, so here, &c.

Concl. 3. This Spirit thus assisting, no unregenerate man ever hath, I speak not now of keeping the soul from falling from grace, but from Christ.

1. Because the spirit of satan fills them, he is the strong man that keeps the palace, under whose kingdom and power they are; and therefore this Spirit which destroys the kingdom of satan is not in them.

2. Because this was a prerogative that Adam had not, though he had great gifts and glory otherwise: so this is not the gift which is given unto them.

3. Because this ariseth, and therefore is given because Christ stood, and therefore those he never stood for, rose for, suffered for, never have it.

4. Therefore we shall see in experience, take the best professors living, though they may come, as they and others judged, to the Lord, and follow the Lord, yet they will in time depart, sometimes outwardly, Jo. vi. 64. "There be some of you that believe not." See them, ver. 66. And why did they depart? "It was not given them of the Father." The Spirit never was given effectually to draw them, nor yet to keep them.

If not outwardly, at least inwardly; and hence hypocrites, though they have marvellous affections unto Christ, and so have spoken of him and commended him, and seemed to be carried above all creatures and duties towards him, yet himself and his mercy, and his blood, becomes a common thing

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to them, and his knowledge and promises common : and hence they slight and loath him, and mourn not for it, and so are so far from being kept close unto Christ, as that they are nearer the unpardonable sin than him. But all they have is like Jonah's gourd, which suddenly riseth, but there is a worm at the root, that pulls it down again : and so their love dies to ministers that Christ sent ; and to his truth and ordinances.

Question. But if the Spirit doth thus, who then shall be saved ? for who is there that departs not ?

Answer. When, I say, the Spirit doth so assist the faithful, as that they never depart : the meaning is not, as though the soul should now never fall into any more sin or unbelief ; for what do the saints more complain of than their backslidings, Isa. lxiii. 17. — Heb. xii. 1. Saints hearts are no sooner raised up, but their weight grows heavy and press them down ; no sooner do they walk in the way, but they begin to fall off : but when I say so, I say three things. 1. Their whole heart never departs. 2. They do not depart forever. 3. Though they do depart from the Lord, yet the Spirit doth not depart from them ; as it is in common reason, the same thing may go either in a straight or crooked line to the same point. As a river may run in a straight or crooked line to the sea. So the saints, their springs (their hearts) being set a running after the Lord, though they do not follow him in a straight line, so as never to depart to the right or left hand ; yet they are so kept by the Spirit that they are continually making after him, cleaving to him ; though with many crooked windings of their hearts, this way and that way from the Lord. And therefore as it is in a wheel, it stands bent for such an end, yet runs at one side, but is turned by the skill of him that guides it into the way again, and so let it run the man is with it : so it is here. And because some-
thing

thing is like this in hypocrites, I shall endeavour to cut the thread.

I. Their whole hearts never do nor can depart from the Lord, all their sins and departings are against their new nature, which the Lord hath given them. It is against the grain, which, as it aggravates their sin; so it shews the difference between their sins and the sins of other men; they may be drawn aside, but it is against their wills, or if so, yet against the bent of their hearts, which is set toward the Lord, and Zion-ward; they may be carried captive against their wills, as Paul complained he was, and made his moan to heaven of it; or if with their wills, yet it is against the active bent of their wills, which inclines them another way, 1 John iii. 9. "They cannot sin, because the seed remains in them;" so that they cannot sin without their whole hearts, nor depart from Christ with their whole hearts; as it is with a woman, though her husband hath her whole heart, yet there is much weakness and sin mixed with this love; so that whatever unkindness she shews, it is not with her whole heart, but against it, and hence she is not cast off: So much more here. Or as it is with the unregenerate man possessed by satan, though he may forsake many sinful courses, take up many duties, despise the world, yet it is not with his whole heart: And hence he is pulled back like a bird by the leg, satan having an end of his heart, and he that is unholy and unclean will be so still. So *e contra*: As it is with a stone, cast it up it is against the bent of it, because the nature of it is to rest in the centre, and hence it comes down again. It is not by internal bent, but by external *vis* or force: so sin and satan being cast out, though they work in the soul, yet they are external agents, (it is not I, but sin,) and hence it is against the bent. The whole soul therefore never departs from the Lord Jesus, but the Spirit keeps it there. As it is in the body of a man, he grows sick, and

and inclines toward a dissolution or consumption, and operations are hindered, and little delight in any thing, yet the soul and body are not yet parted wholly hereupon, for even then they are kept close. So though the heart may depart and incline towards consumption, death, and little can the soul do but lie still and grieve, yet the union between the Spirit and soul once made, is never broken. For as the whole soul departed and made dis-union, so the whole soul returning makes the union. And hence if ever after the whole soul shall depart, the union should be broken, and hence look on a Christian when he is himself, he cannot stir, nor depart; partly by a spirit of fear, Jer. xxxii. 40. Like a man in a ship, he cannot cast himself into the sea, it makes him tremble to think, what if I should fall in, and hence keeps close in the ship, whatever storms come, whatever calms come, for he sees death before him. O the loss of Christ and his fellowship hereafter, nay here, is dreadful to him: partly by a spirit of love, it constrains us, that when the heart sometimes cares not for Christ, yet the spirit of love springs up: shall I now leave him that pitied me, that brought me pardon, when my neck was on the block, &c?

II. When he doth depart by reason of some evil in his heart, yet it is not ever, but he must return sooner or later to him again, it was best to him then. For look as it is with satan, how doth he carry the heart from God? You shall see it in Judas, John xiii. He stands at the door and knocks by a sinful thought liked of ver. 2. Then he enters the house by causing the will to resolve of it. He doth not carry men like those herds of swine against their wills, but prevails with the will to resolve thus, ver. 27. Hereupon satan having a commission carries him out, and he must needs go whom the devils drives; so it is here, the Spirit in recalling the soul will have him come back. 1. Puts in secret sweet living thoughts again,

and makes the soul consider and remember from whom it is fallen, or who is the Lord. 2. Then causeth the will to resolve of a return, and then he must go whom the Spirit draws, Psal. lxxiii. 6. "David remembers the Lord on his bed," though now driven from all ordinances: Hence ver. 7. "Under thy shadow I will rejoice;" hence ver. 8. "My soul followeth hard after thee, or cleaves to thee." But David was weak and feeble, how came he to do this? Ver. 8. "Thy hand upholdeth me." Look as it was with Samson, when his locks were cut, he was like other men, and was made to grind, but they grew again, and then he was like himself again: So when the affections and hearts to Christ are cut, they are like other men for a time; but they are continually coming and growing again, and then they are like themselves again. And I say, they must return; for when the Spirit carries a man indeed, there is a necessity put upon him, Acts iv. 20. "We cannot but speak the things we have heard; and 2 Cor. xiii. 8. "We can do nothing against, but for the truth." For here we shall see the broad difference between a convicted hypocrite, that knows all is amiss with him and the faints: he sees his falls from the Lord, and is afraid in his conscience of misery if he doth not return, and desires and endeavours for to do it; but what if it be hard? and it seem impossible to be better? Now he falls down and thinks this is an infirmity which God will pardon, and so satan conquers him; I say again, not temptation, but satan conquers him: for then a man is conquered, when faith is conquered, 1 John v. 4. Then faith is conquered, when returning to Christ with the whole heart is conquered; the whole heart returns not until a man's will resolves by being prest with a necessity of a return and staying there. Now therefore the Spirit of God puts the soul upon a necessity of returning to the Lord, that when the heart saith, it cannot

cannot be that ever your heart should be better, or the Lord help; it must be faith the soul again, and it is so, I am not able to bear this evil, for mercy must help, and spirit must draw, and hence the soul must come. Psal. xlii. 7, 8. The soul thinks mercy can and is willing, but will it? Why the Lord commands it, when one wave calls in for another, mercy must step in, and hence my prayer is to thee. Now this necessity of returning to the Lord appears chiefly in breaking down all oppositions against its return; which are four.

1. Sometime snares of the world and other things beside. The Lord easeth them, the Lord sends no crosses, gives them their hearts desire, under which vines they rest, yet if the Lord takes not all from them, he puts such a cloyedness in them, that the soul cannot but return to the Lord again, it cannot live on such course bread, things that satisfy not, it had better once, Eccles. ii. 3, 4, 11.

2. Fears and discouragements of spirit; for when delivered from snares, then fears come, and discouragements, either by reason of outward losses or the Lord's anger: so that the soul fears it never had, never shall have any mercy, that hath thus abused it; and it hath thought God himself to say so, and his behaviour in not hearing and helping in so long a time, to witness so: Yet it will return, though the Lord never save it; it will not sin: Jonah yet looks again to the temple, when he could not come to it, yet he would look to it. The soul will turn up its eyes and mourn; O that I have so abused the Lord and mercy! that love itself should be angry and frown! Psal. lxxvii. The Psalmist "refused to be comforted," ver. 2. Nay, ver. 3. Though "he remembered God," and all his love past, yet troubled, this brought a greater trouble, yet ver. 10. "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." Saul did not thus.

3. Thoughts of impossibility and unlikelihood to get peace or pardon, or victory over sin now. For sometime the saints think, the Lord loves me, and yet lets these evils lie here, but I can get no help now, especially if after many prayers. I know help against all sins they cannot get, and hence are humbled, but against them sins that help can be got, wherein the Lord hath done it for others, and which make, the Lord estrange himself, it must be had (for this temptation to a saint is an hypocrite's overthrow) Psal. xviii 21, 22, 23. If earth cannot help, cannot heaven? What, not the Spirit, word, blood, mercy of a tender hearted Redeemer? What though not now? yet I will not give him over.

4. When God's Providence seems to cross his promise, yet they will cleave to him or return to him. For many times saints have their estates in the bonds of God's promises, and hence they wait for accomplishment of them; but the Lord carries it quite cross to his promise to their seeming. He promiseth to make alive, to comfort, to sanctify, to be with me; and he kills, sads, lets out sin, never such a heart, and forsakes me. O now faith shakes! yet they will not away, Heb. xi. 15, 16. The Lord calls them to forsake their country; Abraham is a stranger there, and that among cut-throat Canaanites, and dwells in tabernacles, and four hundred years after, his posterity being afflicted should have it; yet he would not return, though they might, God had said here, "I will bless thee," so here. The murmuring Israelites fell short of this.

III. Whenever the soul doth depart, yet the Spirit of God is ever in it and with it, Psal. lxxiii. 2. The Psalmist "almost fell." Why did he not? "Thou art ever with me, thy hand," ver. 23. "hath upheld me." So that as the Spirit keeps the soul to Christ, so it keeps Christ in the soul at all times. And hence saints in the closure of all their dealings with God,
and

and he with them, they have seen his love, working good in all, that now the soul can say, Lo "the Lord" "was here, and I knew it not," Isa. xxv. 9, 10. That the soul admires sometimes, and hence after all sees the Lord more clearly and fully and sweetly, till at last it sees him in glory. Thus you see the Spirit that follows saints is with them, which the world wants. O admire at the Lord, if this Spirit be given, that heaven is come down into thy hell! That no miseries, no sins can part, but it is ever putting thee in thy way again. Hence when

1. They are ready quite to fall off, and give themselves for gone, ready to be made away by temptation, or to make away themselves, the Lord is with them then, Psal. xciv. 18. At the time of parting, love appears.

2. Hence when they are sometime so far gone, as that they mind not their return, or believe not, as in the wilderness, but are well enough without the Lord, the Lord before they think or desire, prevents them, Psal. xxiii. 6. "Mercy and truth follows me."

3. Hence when they think the Lord is provoked that he cannot save, then he is in the midst of his people, Jer. xix. 11. "Why art thou as a man astonished that cannot save?"

4. Hence at the end of life, all the ways of God have been peace, and all our ways, though evil, turned for good; as in Jonas his departing; and by miseries we are yet humbled; something the Lord is doing now for eternity, Micah vii. 8. "Though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me."

5. Hence when the heart and strength fail, and faith is failing, and the heart feels nothing but pain, yet the Lord then keeps, and this is comfort, Psal. lxi. 26.

Consider therefore your estate, that

1. Do depart with your whole heart from the Lord. Hath not the Lord bowed thy heart toward himself,

by

by mercies, by blows? But when sorrows have been past, and mercies grown common, and truth common, thou hast started back like a broken bow which was bent backward, when stretched forward. And now when God calls to any duty, especially when thy will and ends are crossed, that is a burden, and thou art drawn to that as a fish to the dry land. It is like a fever-fit to thee, and never mournest for this. But when any matter of gain and world is presented, all thoughts, time, strength is too little there, that you smell of the field; or if there be any life or joy, yet "the lean kine eat up the fat kine. Nay, mournest thou not under that cursed bent which carries thee from the Lord. Know it, thou art forsaken of the Lord.

2. Thou that in times past had many affections, but now sorrow is gone, and seeking of the Lord gone; and being fallen, feelest it not, but thinkest it is with thee as with other Christians, hast only the old work past, and some new pangs now and then. Why is it thus? Jer. viii. 4, 5. Will you fall, and not arise? Will you let the Lord turn from you, and not return? Doth the "stork know when winter is near, and "not you your season?" O look to it! What, are you fallen with a perpetual backsliding? Why will you not return, but go away with a perpetual backsliding? Know, satan hath hold of this soul.

3. You people of God, wonder you at this grace: Let your experience prove it. Is it not so, that a habitation of devils should be a house of the Spirit of God, not to sojourn, but dwell there, and though abused, vexed, yet it will not depart.

S E C T. V.

V. Sanctification, in the room of self-seeking.

THIS work of the Spirit hath had many scratches, and passed under divers censures, that if that ques-
tion

tion should be asked of it, which once Christ made concerning himself, "Whom say men that I am?" We shall find five several apprehensions of it.

1. Some have made it common, and that this treasure may be digged out of dung-hills, that the Lord casts these pearls to swine, that a carnal heart may have all these gifts and graces which the righteous have, and Adam had, and perish at last. And hence no evidence from it at all.

2. Some have not made it thus common, but proper to the elect, and that none are justified but they are sanctified, and *e contra*. But it hath been, and, they think it is so disguised with the mixture of sin and temptation, and cannot be known or very hardly. Ibeso, that though the Lord Jesus "come unto his own," and dwell not only in their houses, but in their hearts, yet they know him not.

3. Some say it may be known, but not as dwelling in our hearts, but as inherent in Christ, making the inherent grace of Christ in Christ himself to be our sanctification, which the apostle makes to be our righteousness. And so as the papists abolish Christ's righteousness for justification, by making it to consist only in infusion of grace in us; these abolish Christ to be our sanctification, by making all our sanctification to consist in inhætion in Christ out of us.

4. Some say there is a sanctification in us: but wherein doth it consist? Not in any habitual holiness, or graces in us, but in the immediate actings of Christ in us, and so the Lord makes his music without any strings, and reveals things to us without eyes, and makes us live without any power of life: and so after justification they put a Christian in such an estate of sanctification as that he is a mere patient, in next disposition to move if he be moved: like a weather cock, which hath no power at all to move, but as the wind blows it, good or bad.

5. Some grant that there is a sanctification proper

to the faithful, and in the faithful an habitual holiness, and consisting in a most blessed, inward, total change. But when they come to the application of this to themselves, they think that if they have some reformation with some inward affection, they think every overly change is sanctification, and this must be a good evidence to them. And so like some herbalists that treat of the sovereign excellencies of several herbs, but when they come to gather them in the garden, they take their counterfeits in the room of them. The causes of which variety of apprehensions is the rareness of it (and therefore it is unknown) and the common experience of men.

I shall therefore lay level these things, by shewing you what that measure of sanctification is which is in us, and which is peculiar to the elect, and which also may be known by them which have it: and therefore shall not speak of sanctification at large, which is the change of the whole man by the death of Christ, whereby he is separated from sin, and sin mortified in him; and by the life of Christ, whereby he is dedicated unto Christ, and lives his life. But I shall treat of it now so far forth especially as this change may be known by it; and therefore I oppose it to self-seeking.

Question. But why do you oppose sanctification to self-seeking?

Answer 1. Because this sanctification, I now speak of it so far forth as it may be seen; now it is seen here chiefly, because it may be said here it is: but hypocrites have a change: Wherein may it be known to be different from theirs? Why, the change of the heart chiefly appears in the change of the utmost end.

2. Because as the pollution of the whole man, and all his actions civil, moral, and religious, consist chiefly, and appear in this self-seeking, or making ourselves our utmost end. This makes the most glorious ac-

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tions vile, and stains them all. So the sanctification of a man consists chiefly and appears in making the Lord our utmost end of all we do: So that though the actions be never so mean and poor, yet this puts a glory and lustre on them, and is the crown of them, even of the "giving of a cup of cold water," Mat. vi. 22. "If thy eye be single." Look therefore, as before the Lord justifies the soul, every man living seeks himself as his last end and good; and out of this captivity no power can redeem them. Dan. iv. 30. Gen. xi. 4. So after it, the Lord sanctifies the soul with such a measure of his grace as makes the Lord his utmost end: And this no other have.

Let me therefore shew you what this sanctification is more fully, and with all the chief ingredients in it, that so it may be the better known.

It is the renovation of the whole man, appearing in the change of a man's utmost end. But more particularly.

It is that work of the Spirit in the soul, whereby the soul beholding the glory of Christ, and feeling his love, hereupon closeth with the whole will of Christ, and seeketh to please him, as his happiness and utmost end.

For look as in self-seeking there are four things.

1. A man beholds himself, and some good in himself.

2. Loves himself abundantly.

3. Pleaseth his own will.

4. Doth this as his utmost and last end. So here in this description of sanctification, which I oppose chiefly to self-corruption, are four things.

1. The soul beholds the Lord in all his glory, seeing of him present with him in all his glory, and set before him, Psal. xvi. 8. For this is one necessary ingredient to his sanctification and seeking the Lord as his utmost end. For why doth a man seek himself? He sees some glory and good in himself, none

in the Lord. And hence we say of some men, whose pride spoils their parts, they know themselves too well, and hence saints, when they see their own vileness, and see the Lord, they are so far from seeking, as that they loathe themselves. Therefore when the Lord reveals himself to the soul in his glory, this makes them seek him and not themselves, 1 Cor. i. 30. "Christ is made wisdom, righteousness, &c. that all might glory in him." For this is the glory of Christ, and the first principle of seeking the Lord, the soul sees his good laid up in the Lord more than in himself; nay wholly in the Lord, not at all in himself. His wisdom is in him, he cannot but wander till utterly lost without him. His righteousness is in him, he could never have one sin pardoned by angels holiness without him. His sanctification is in him, he could not have the least thought nor desire, but the Lord must work it in him. His redemption is in him, there could not be freedom one hour from unknown evils but by him. Hence seeing him such an one, he seeks him. As why do men seek men, especially if great? Why do men desire to stand before princes, and please them, so that they will not gladly offer them the least distaste? Because they see them before them, beholding of them, apt to be angry, if displeased; and their greatness awes them. So here. Why is not the Lord Jesus pleased? He is not seen in his glory, nor made really present; and hence Rev. v. 12, 13. When they saw him "on his throne, they cast down their crowns and gave him glory."

2. The soul also feels his love, and so abundantly loves him again. For how come men to seek themselves in every thing, and they cannot but do it? It is because they love themselves, and that abundantly necessarily, as fire burns; so though they burn so hot in this love, that at last they consume themselves. So how do any, can any seek the Lord? We know the apostle saith, 1 Cor. xiii. 5. "Love seeks not her

"own."

"own." When the Sun hath put out this fire of our self-love, when the sense of the Lord's love hath kindled that love to the Lord again, as that it abundantly loves Christ, now it will seek the things of Christ, and not its own things. And as there is a bundance of self-love, that men are eaten up with it; so there must be much love, which must be abundantly shed in the heart, so as to eat up that; arising from the sense of the Lord's love, and that abundantly. For many a man comes to have some good will, and affection, and love to the Lord, but yet never comes to seek the Lord as his last end, and live to him. Why? Because he hath not tasted abundantly of the Lord's mercy, grace, and love, Psal. lxxxvii. 12, 13. And hence the incomparable spirit of Paul, "I seek not yours, but you;" Wherein? In being "willing to spend." But save yourself Paul: Nay, "and to be spent:" With much ado; nay, "most gladly." Though you love me not, because I love you: So here, though Christ should not love it, yet he is worthy, he hath done enough, and now the soul will not only do, but rejoice, nay, in sufferings; because his love is not dropt, but shed in our hearts. And hence it is a never failing rule, little love or assurance of it, little seeking the Lord; much assurance, much seeking him.

13. Hereupon the soul closeth with the whole will of Christ, and pleaseth it, because it pleaseth him. It is with every man, as it was with Sampson, he would needs have a wife of the Philistines; why so? Judg. xiv. 3. Because "she pleaseth me." So, why will men seek themselves, save themselves, love themselves, and please their own wills? because it pleaseth them. Look therefore as the soul when he loved himself, did seek to please only his own will in every thing, and it is good because it pleaseth me; so the soul, whose heart is now indared to Christ, though he cannot perfectly do it (that is in heaven) yet he seeks to give

the whole will of Christ content, because it pleaseth Christ. And this is that God hath sworn his people shall have, Luke i. 74, 75. "And that Christ hath delivered us from all our enemies;" (For the great reason why men cleave not to the Lord, and please, which we account friends, which are the Lord's enemies, Satan and world) "to serve him without fear," i. e. in love, and "in holiness and righteousness," i. e. his whole will "all our days." And hence Eph. v. 8, 9. "They were darkness, but now are light," by faith, now there is sanctity, "walk as children of light." Wherein consists that? "Proving what is acceptable to God." Hence Eph. vi. 6. "They should please Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." And this is so necessary, that Gal. ii. 10. The apostle saith, "If I please men, I please their wills, I am not Christ's." And this is "walking worthy of the Lord, pleasing him in all things," and this is fruit, the end of the tree and leaves also, and differencing a tree from all other, that be beautiful, but barren, Col. i. 10.

Question. But why do you make this to consist in pleasing the whole will of Christ, and not of God the Creator?

Answer. i. Because our sanctification now cannot please God as a Creator, though it may please him that is the Creator in Christ, because only perfect holiness can please him. 2. Because Christ hath pleased the Father by the holiness of himself, now this being done, and therefore God having put all things into his hands, having done that for us, we are to give content to him. And herein our sanctification is differing from the image Adam had, who in closing with the will of God, looked upon him as a Creator; ours respects a Redeemer, who hath bought us to himself, and hence we are to respect him in our actions now.

Question. But why doth the soul close with the whole

whole will of Christ, i. e. so far as it is made known.

Answer. First, because the holiness of Christ here chiefly discovers itself, and against this a carnal heart will discover itself. For Capernaïtes may boast in, and give entertainment to the person of Christ, but when they come to repent (which was one part of his will) that they did not, that they would not: "Woe therefore to the Capernaum: as many will close with Christ for pardon of sin, and lay their sacks on him, but you must burden yourselves with them, or the Lord will never ease you of them." Woe, and hence they have light sorrow for sin; many will embrace the comforts of Christ, and love of Christ, and this joys them, yet the will of Christ that is wearisome to them, Rom. viii. 8. They will pick and chuse.

Secondly, because this discovers a deep ditch of deceit in the heart, many take up some duties, and why do they do them? Because they please the Lord, and the Lord commands, and for his sake, when indeed it is to please themselves: for in other things they care not whether they please the Lord or no.

Thirdly, because this closing with his whole will only gives the Lord content: as it is not the strings, or striking upon one string that makes the music, but striking on them all according to rule. So here; and hence when they sacrificed and observed new moons, *Mat. i. 12.* "Who hath required these things at your gift hands?" Hence when the people begin to put the Lord off with mean performances, any common stuff, the Lord takes state upon him, and saith, he is a King, *Mal. i. 14.* and *9. 10.* "I have no pleasure in you."

Fourthly, because this only will give peace; and therefore let any man begin to pick and chuse, and his heart lie to the Lord's will, if Jonah like he will

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lie from any way of the Lord's and continue there, he shall have storms : and hence 1 John ii. 3, 4, 5. "Hereby we know him," &c.

4. He closeth with the whole will of the Lord as his happiness and utmost end ; as a man made himself his last end before, and desired God and Christ only to keep his sores from aking, for so I look upon all men made up of wants ; if the body ake with cold, stomach with hunger, head for want of sleep, conscience for sin, all happiness lies in the easing hereof, and here lies their bliss. So now the soul makes the life of the Lord its happiness, to live unto him, Gal. ii. 19. He makes it his meat and drink to do the Lord's will ; for Jehu sought the Lord, but his last end was himself, as John xvi. 2. "A man may kill, and think he doth God good service," but that is not his last end ; a carnal heart may cross his own will, but not his own utmost end, as Judas : a man may seek the Lord with delight, and follow the ordinances, and fast, and pray, but himself is his end still, Zach. vii. 5, 6. — Isa. lvi. 4, 5. As a man that goes to a city, he will do your business, but he would not go unless he had his own ends to bring about there. But those that are truly sanctified, make the Lord their last end and happiness. It is not only good to do the Lord's will, (for thus men may seek the Lord) as thinking it good so to do, but as their blessedness, else it is not their last end, and so not sought as their last end ; and so it is with the soul. As a river runs to the sea, many springs run into it, and it carries them down all into it ; so there are many occasions, hinderances, businesses, yet it carries them all down with it, even the more violently, the more it is hindred, Psal. cxix. 126, 127. "Therefore love I them above gold." And this expresseth itself in three things :

1. In admiring the glory of the Lord, and his will and ways, and accounting them happy men, and blessed,

fed, that thus can and do live. For sometime the soul is decayed and fallen from this, or sick and weak; now it accounts them happy, that have health and strength to walk abroad, Psal. i. 1, 2.

2. In being never at rest in his mind until now that he comes to this; for therein a man's making any thing his last end appears; as he made his goods his last end, Luke xii. 19. Now therefore my soul be at rest, for there is no seeing the Lord but self-seeking hinders: now though it be thus yet, do I make myself my last end & then my mind would be at rest; but if satisfied, it is not at rest till now: and hence Paul when he had run this race, now you see him leaning upon his pillow, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. And hence saints are loth to die and be blessed in heaven, because they have done so little work as yet; little do the saints for the Lord many times, yet their hearts are upright; for what mourn they for so much as this, when they have looked upon it; O that the Lord hath been a loser by them!

3. It carries the soul through all difficulties with power and delight, Prov. x. 29. "The way of the Lord is strength to the righteous, and joy. Rom. vii. 22. "I do delight in the law of God in the inner man." Other nations walk "in the name of their gods, we in ours," Micah. iv. 5. As when wealth or honour is a man's utmost end, with what violence are men carried to it; and hence a man thinks he hath never such good days as then when he can do much for the Lord; and hence when any duty is to be done, when fearful to do it, or loth to perform it, when the heart is dead, yet beholding it with a spiritual eye, that this gives Jehovah honour, O this carries the soul head-long even into miseries, "Not my will, but thine be done." This easeth the heart, even in the belly of hell, and in times of the deepest desertion.

To this sanctification all the saints do come, every

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one in their measure ; and if ever the soul tasted the Lord's love, or ever was humbled with the bitterness of sin, the first voice and main care is ; " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? " Nay, though no assurance, and it cannot joy in the Lord's love, yet it will in the Lord's will ; and hence when it hath full assurance, yet finding such a vile heart, if God should give it heaven with such a heart it would be death : and hence when he thinks of going to hell, yet there (saith he) let me bless thee !

This sanctification all unsound hearts do want ; much reformation, much affection, many duties, but their end is not changed, though their lives be, and hearts seem to be.

1. Because they cannot love the Lord, because the Lord doth never shed his love into their hearts.

2. This was the life of Christ, John viii. 20. of which life they that are dead in sin never have one act, though they may think they have.

3. This is the end of our election, which therefore an unsound heart may as soon attain to, as to elect, or to be elected of God, Eph. i. 4. " holy in love."

This may easily be known, 1. Cannot a man know when he is happy ? 2. Cannot Peter tell Christ that he loves him ? 3. Cannot a man tell whether he be an hypocrite or no ? For he that cannot prove his utmost end is changed, must confess himself an hypocrite yet, his heart was never changed, whatever assurance or peace he hath had ; a thing is never good till it serves its end it was made for.

O therefore look that you content not yourselves with reformation, but come to this ; else 1. You lose all your obedience, the Lord regards it not, the Lord will take all from you ; as vessels that are made to hold wine, and they cannot, lay them bye, " the Lord hath no pleasure in you," Mal. i. 8, 9, 10. 2. If you do, the Lord will accept your poorest and meanest services : Consider,

1. Christ

Christ cast by his robes being privy to his own worth, to become obedient, Phil. ii. 6, 8.

2. His infinite wisdom is in every command, though thy carnal reason like it not.

3. His infinite love for thy good, though thou thinkest it is for thy hurt.

4. His glory, though thou gettest no good at all by it.

S. E. C. T. VI.

VI. FULNESS of the Spirit of glory, in the room of the world.

"Whom the Lord doth justify, those he doth glorify," Rom. viii. 30, i. e. with the glory of another world, which though it be hid for a time from others, and sometimes from themselves, yet they do partake of it now, and it shall be revealed upon them another day, 1 Peter v. 1. Now though hypocrites may taste of the word; nay, of the powers of the world to come, yet they fall short of this measure of glory. And I say, this fills them in the room of this world.

Question. How are men full of the world, and what is the Spirit of glory?

Answer. I shall shew this in three conclusions.

Concl. 1. That the full rest and peace of the soul is to be found only in the presence of God Almighty, in this Being of beings. His perfections are in himself, and hence he keeps a perpetual sabbath of rest in himself; in this rest only the soul of man can find rest, Heb. iv. 6, 10.—Psal. xvi. 11. He is the journey's end of all a man's labours and life and travels. Hence John xvii. 13. When Christ's work was ended, now I come not to heaven so much as to thee. And hence when Solomon had tired out him-

self in his travels through all the things of this world, to find rest, he returns empty and crying home, and now when he sums up his glory, Ecclef. i. 1, 2. He stiles himself,

1. A man gathered to the church, to be as near God as he can.

2. "The Son of David," to whom the promises were made.

And then, 3. "Kings of Jerusalem," the last and least. He is that house and home of his people, whether in fleeting or settled condition, from one generation to another, Psal. xc. 1. So that the prophet finding this to be most true, I say, stands astonished at men; and because men had deaf ears here, and their bellies could not hear, he cries to the heavens to be astonished at this, Jer. ii. 12, 13. This wine the Lord puts under his lock and key; it is not to be found in earth, in church liberties, you may soon see this temple not one stone left on another, nor in heaven simply, nor in fellowship of angels; only it is in the Lord, drawing nigh to the soul in these, and drawing the soul at last near to himself by these.

Concl. 2. That all reprobates being estranged from God, and God from them, are also strangers to this rest, this life of God, this life of glory, Eph. iv. 18. and therefore seek for it and suck it out of the paps of the creature, and that which is not God. And thus their hearts are full of the world, Psal. xvii. 14. "Dust they eat, and upon their bellies they go," shift for it where they will, they shall never find it in him: and if they do find it any where else in this world, let them fill themselves to the full, for they have their portion, they have their reward. And hence they do (all unregenerate men living) find their rest in something out of God; rest to their consciences in duties, and something of God; rest to their hearts

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in some creatures, either unlawful or lawful, Matth. xxiv. 38. And there is never a carnal heart, but give him his imaginary content here, and he would desire to live here as an exile from God, and to be without him, if there were no hell, no plagues, &c. For here is their treasure, not above; here are thy good things: and this is the very reason why a man lives without God, nay when he stands convinced of it, nay when troubled with thoughts of this, and no duties can ease him, because something out of God is his bottom to stand upon, and his rest and peace; it may be meat, drink, health, sleep, occasional delights and a quiet life. That as it is with seamen, they can endure winds and weather, and rent sails, and torn masts, because they live upon that trade, another will not: so it is here. Though many troubles of mind, yet they ply that oar, it is their living.

Concl. 3. That all those whom the Lord intends good unto, those he calls in time out of this world into his eternal glory of rest and peace, out of this world into another. And as their hearts were filled with another world before, so their hearts are filled with the glory of this other world now, John xvii. 14. 16.—1 Peter v. 10. And this rest and peace in God is the glory of the saints. That look as it is with reprobates, what is their last and great woe? 2 Thess. xix. "It is separation from the Lord;" so this is the great glory of the saints, to enter into him, as Moses did into the cloud, and so to rest in him. "I go to my God and your God." Hence the saints are said to "sell away all for this treasure," for this pearl, for the Lord: and so the Lord is instead of all, and better to them than all they had before. They can live royally upon him, having but one thing to look to, and having all things in this one thing; and more royally than the princes of the world can upon their lusts and earthly treasures. This is the rest and peace the saints have, Heb. iv. 3. "They that

"believe do enter into rest." God calls them out of the world by some bitterness of it, or by some cloying and surfeiting, and making their hearts weary of the sweetness thereof, and then they enter into glory. The Lord sees nothing can fill their hearts nor stop their cries, but him, and now this sea of glory breaks in upon them, and fills their hearts: and this the Lord doth two ways, according as there are two things in that good that fills the heart.

1. Proportion.

2. Propriety.

So there are two rays of eternal glory chiefly, whereby the Lord gives full rest and peace, and so glory to his people.

1. He reveals the good they are to enjoy in another world, in its full proportion, viz. "what is the riches of the inheritance of the saints," Eph. i. 17, 18. For no good satisfies till it is known in its greatness, though yet there be degrees of this. For we shall see many Christians have assurance, where is the joy of it? Not affected with it, because he knows not what it is at that time. At another time his heart is above all the world, because he sees what is that glory the saints have, and that he hath it, it swallows him up and confounds him. Why me Lord! And this is the reason why the saints doubt, whom the Lord hath loosened from their lusts and all things here. What so vile, and all that mine? And this is the reason why when doubting, so that there is nothing in this world that doth quiet them, nothing from God that doth ease them, yet their hearts are sweetly eased: Their desires are after him, and their delights in his company, better go to hell thus than in my sins; and the thoughts of the Lord are sweet, because he hath and doth secretly fill their hearts. Something they have or do see in him, Isa. xxvi. 8. And hence is the reason of the sorrows of them, when their hearts are worst, now though they have the world, yet are not

not at rest, because they have and do see something of this.

2. He reveals by the spirit and light of glory that this good is theirs, their propriety. The first gives rest to the soul, viz. the spirit of vision incompletely. This spirit of faith, whereby the soul knows all this good is mine, this gives it completely. Now the New Jerusalem is come down from heaven, and God is among men, 1 Peter 1. 8. For if a Christian sees the greatness of this glory, but not as his, the soul will never cleave to the Lord indeed, nor find full rest; and hence when the riches of God's grace is revealed, and the feast set before them, they do not eat, because they fear they were not bidden. Now both these give full peace and rest to the soul, when the soul hath the Lord Jehovah in his arms, and hence he cares not now when death comes: O it shall be a welcome day to them! And hence they wish they might sin no more, or cease to be. And hence they wish they could set even the whole world a wondering, Was it ever heard since the world began of such a pattern of mercy? Is it true, the Lord indeed keeps his servants for a time under much darkness and doubts, but it is certain even in the meanest saints this light is sown for them, and "joy for the upright in heart," and some work there is for the Lord to do for them, and then he keeps a Sabbath of rest in them.

Quest. But have not many hypocrites their joys, their peace, their glory?

Ans. Yes, they have some tastes and likeness to this, but want this indeed; and the difference appears in three particulars.

1. The peace and joy and assurance of that glory which eye never saw in the saints, it is from the witness of the Spirit of glory; not only because that God is their God, but because they are his people. It is, I say, from the witness of God in his word, not from them.

themselves, nor from man only that they approve me, nor from dreams and diabolical breathings, but from the Spirit of God, he brings tidings of it, and from such a Spirit (that you may know it) that not only shews you God is your God, and so you rejoice because of this, for thus it is with many a carnal heart, and he hath peace, being in horror, from this, the Lord loves me; but he makes you to rejoice because you are the Lord's people, because he hath changed your heart, now the peace is sound, and joy is right; and here I would try the peace of any man, God hath witnessed pardon to thee, but hath he shewed thee thou art his? If so, be thankful. But here is the doubt, for it may be the change is not right. And hence those two are ever joined together, Zach. xiii. 9. John xiv. 20, 21, 22. Horror lies heavy, hence love is sweet; sin lies heavy, hence this witness, they are changed, they are subdued, and shall be so, this is sweet also.

2. The rest and peace the saints have, it is not only from God, but in him. It is with the soul as with a malefactor imprisoned and condemned, the jailor comes and tells him that he hath his pardon here brought him from the king; How shall it be proved whether it be a device of his own brain or no? Why if it be of the jailor's own devising, he will never lead him before the king, but from him he shall be carried: But if the messenger carry him before the king, and sets him down before him, and as it was with Joseph, his prison-garments are put off, and he stands before the king, and glories in his presence, now it is right. So many have peace, and satan sets them at liberty, but carries them from God. But when there is a witness of peace from him, and then you stand before him, now it is from heaven, Psal. xxxvi. 7, 8. There is peace from him and peace in him, Psal. xxxvii. 4. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart." When it is thus, all you desire is granted.

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3. The peace the saints have both from God and in God, fills them with everlasting content and peace, Rom. xv. 13. Isa. xi. 9. "Filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." The earth is the rest of the waters, and the waters fill all its empty place: So it is here, the soul is the rest of the Lord, Isa. xi. 10. and he fills their empty hearts. A malefactor may dream he is before the king, when he hath his fetters on his legs; but his dream feeds him not, but when he awakes, he is hungry: And so it is with many a carnal heart that is a dream for a time, but he meets not with eternal satisfaction, Psal. lxxv. 4. and Psal. xc. 14. And hence men after they have had their peace, grow more bold to sin, and more impenitent in sin, and more worldly than ever before, because they have not everlasting joy; as those, Isa. xxxv. 10. "Everlasting joys shall be upon their head" (whereas a carnal heart hath soon enough of God) not everlasting, without intermission of joy, for they must have their nights and tears, as well as their day and joys; but everlasting, without decay of joy; that though they have their tears, yet God wipes them away; there is nothing else, their joy, their peace, and so their hearts are forever satisfied here. As Christ, when he knew it was "finished, now he gave up the Ghost," so when the soul finds, he is come, now it dies to the world, and makes its perpetual abode in him. Others will have their carrion, and their stolen waters, how clean soever they wipe their mouths.

Objection. 1. But have not the saints many sorrows, reproaches, persecutions?

Answer. Rom. viii. 18. "They are not worthy the glory to be revealed." 2 Cor. iv. 17. "They work a weight of glory," and in these they glory. O "the Lord's love is shed in their hearts!" Rom. v. 3, 5.

Object

Objection. 2. But have they not many losses, and wants, and straits, and then where is their joy?

Ans. A carnal heart he murmurs indeed, and sinks, and dies away; but it is not so here, Hab. iii. 17, 18. A saint takes it out in him, in the Lord, it makes all the world too narrow for him. Others are burnt and consumed in the fire, but so is not he that hath the Son of God with him.

Objection. 3. But he hath many sins and temptations.

Answer. 1. Pet. ii. 5, 6, 7. "You greatly rejoice in the salvation reserved for you, though now your faith have a precious trial by manifold temptations."

Objection. 4. But are not the hearts of the saints taken off from the Lord, and taken up with other things?

Answer. No, never as carnal men's are, Tit. ii. 12.

"For God's grace that hath appeared to them, teacheth them to deny worldly lusts," as we deny children their asking. They may greedily carry the soul by fits from the Lord, but he denies them their fill in any creature, and calls them all to "come up hither." He denies them, as we do beggars, entrance, and if they do enter, he denies them lodging, they shall not have good looks from him. Every vile heart hath either a proud, or worldly, or covetous heart, and these lusts being urgent and entreating long, he cannot deny them the best room he has. O it is the woe of men they cannot but do thus.

But thus you see this world is cast out, and glory comes in to all saints: O this world is the cause of all sin!

1. Why do men neglect duties in secret?
2. Sleep at meetings?
3. Though so fair abroad, yet passionate at home, and storms there?
4. Whence are wars and wranglings about rates and lots? O this world!
5. Whence

5. Whence apostacy? It is not with you as in former times, worse now than in persecution; and sermon-proof now? O this world! Whence is hardness of heart? O something of the world easeth you! And whence is it that men with rich stocks are goodly things, and wondred at; and holiness and walking with God, and things of heaven are nothing? O this evil world! "O adulterers and adulteresses," know you not that you hate the Lord, and the Lord you? It is the cause of all thy sin; but see withal it is the cause of all thy sorrow, heaven and the glory of that would enter, but for it, but that it cannot, because thou art full of it; O poor creatures, take your farewell quickly of it, or the Lord will meet with you for it! Cry to the Lord, O call me to come up unto thyself!

Thus you see the fulness of the Spirit which the saints have; and therefore that conceit, that saints have nothing whereby to discern them, let it forever perish and rot.

S E C T. VII.

Use 4. Of Exhortation. TAKE heed you fall not short of the grace of God, of the promise and Spirit of grace, Heb. xii. 15. O get oil in your vessels! When there is much counterfeit gold abroad, every man will have his scales, and not only look and rub, but he will weigh every piece he takes: was there ever more counterfeits abroad, or such similitudes of the truth? Insomuch as some in their opinions, think it impossible, others in their practices find it hard and very difficult to distinguish the one from the other. O but there is a vast distance and difference! As ever you look for mercy, get this oil in your vessel. As ever you look for peace, know that you have it in your vessel. I am perswaded that there is never a soul that follows the Lord tremblingly and tenderly,

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but

but when he hears of this, sends up his sighs, good Lord let me not fail here; better never have had thy name in my forehead, nor affection in my heart, than to want oil in my vessel: and I am perswaded he trembles to think, what if I should perish at the last? And yet how many never have strong fears of failing here, that have most cause so to do! This parable is directed to virgin churches at the last period of the decrepid world; wherein methinks the Lord Jesus speaks unto his people, there is much profession, affection, but O take heed you perish not for want of oil in your vessel. Let all your care be to get that, and fear to want that, wherein the Lord doth answer that fear, and question, and thought of his people: O what if I should perish at last? Get oil in your vessel then, and if the Lord Jesus had been of that mind that there are no inherent graces in the saints, or so dim they cannot be known, or if known you are not to respect them as any signs, but to look for a witness of grace upon you, or out of you, without respecting or looking upon grace in you, he would never have recorded this parable, which to wise virgins is to prevent those conceits: O therefore how many fall short here, and regard not this!

1. Some fall short here by trusting to, and omni-fying of Christ and grace, regarding not any grace within; they separate those things from one another which God hath joined, and which a gracious heart joins one to another: They respect not sanctification, faith or vocation, they look to Christ, and can they honour Christ enough? Hence profess they that regard those things have trusted to their frames of heart, and they scoff at them that look to be justified by faith: It is such a delusion as is likely "to deceive (if possible) the very elect." Look as it was with the Israelites, 1 Sam. iv. They were overthrown in the battle of the Philistines; but what is the cause?

"O send for the ark where the strength and presence

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"of God was:" But what good did the ark do them with unhumbled hearts, that looked to that, and trusted to that, but mind not themselves; and hence when Samuel bids them, "turn from their idols, and serve the Lord only," now they do it; so here.

2. Some only look to the outside, like those that "built the tombs and painted the sepulchres of the prophets." And hence if they be inwardly zealous for external order, ceremony, ordinances, carriage in garments, speeches, &c. they think the bitterness of death is past, when Agag-like they are clad with such soft raiment, and hence if there be transgression here it is sad: But what if they walk with unbroken hearts? O they respect not this! And so their care being taken up in trimming and making the vessel bright, they neglect to get oil within.

3. Some fall short here by thinking this thought, that that grace which is inward is also sincere and unfeigned: and hence do not judge themselves profane nor civil, because of their profession, nor yet hypocrites because they do not make only an outward shew, whenas the deepest hypocrisy lies under much inward affection many times: And hence they take every such work upon trust without weighing it, if double guilt, and there is no shew of copper, put it up, never enquiring where the bounds of truth and hypocrisy part: And hence if they have inward comfort, though by a dream, they take it: If upon their sick-beds after trouble they have had peace, they take it on trust: if they have any promise of rest and peace, or feel some desires, love to ordinances, and God's people; they take hold on promises, and trust themselves without trying, without weighing: Sudden work is superficial.

4. Some feel a want of these things, and content themselves with desires, and so never come to be indeed what they desire to be: It is true, saints feel wants and desire supply: But,

tified till it is so indeed: "My flesh is meat indeed." 2. They are humble and vile in their own eyes till the Lord help; but these like Solomon's sluggard, "desire and have not," whereas in things of lesser worth they will not do so, they will not only desire, but indeed till the ground; if one neglects to till, though they answer, I desire, and God accepts that, every one will say he is deceived; their hunger is their food; they build the sluggard's nest of desire, and there sit: O therefore take heed you fall not short here! Take heed your prayers and desires prove not lazy and unfaithful messengers which you send to your friends to come and help you, and they go half way and no further, and never bring them to you indeed. O therefore get your oil in your vessels, do not only fear the Lord, "fear him greatly," 1 Sam. xii. 18. Do not only cleave to the Lord, but with the whole heart, and cleave to him only; beg this of the Lord. Look as poor people when they come to rich men that have full heaps, do say, let me have full measure, my family is poor, and charge great: So here!

Motive 1. Consider if once you get this, it will never die, it shall increase exceedingly: It is a treasure you cannot part withal, that you shall never grow poor with; but Luke viii. 18. "From him that hath not, shall be taken away that which he seemed to have." O many a one saith, I fear I shall fall at last, and I find my heart so soon cooled; O get this, nothing shall quench it again? If you say, I cannot keep it, I say, it shall keep you, Prov. ii. 10, 11. Not when you have Christ and Spirit, and grace in your head, nor in your conscience to give you peace, but in your heart; and when nothing is sweet but that, nothing lies between your heart and that; it shall now preserve and keep thee, it shall follow thee, fill thee, rear thee, live with thee, go to heaven with thee, &c. Mark this you feeble ones.

WORK

Mot. 2.

Motive 2. O consider what a sad thing it will be to thy heart to miss of, and lose the Lord at last: The servants in Isaac's family did not mourn so much as Esau when the blessing was gone. Why? They never had hope of it; never were near it. He was so long in the field that the blessing was gone before he came, and he sold it away for a trifle. So them that never came so near the Lord and his blessing, never will have such sorrow, especially to think I sold it away for a trifle. O, thought Esau, that I had come a little sooner, &c. When Saul went to Gilgal to sacrifice, *1 Sam. xiii. 10.* "He staid seven days, and then sacrificed before the Lord," but then his doom was passed by God: And it is said presently Samuel came; O if he had staid a little longer! So you will one day think, I sought and waited; but forsook the Lord. O had I waited one day more I had been well. This is the reason why the hypocrite's portion is heaviness in hell.

Motive 3. You will say, it will be heavy hereafter, but not now? Yes, now too if you do consider the Lord Jesus is so full, and thou not to have one drop of that which is saving, even when you come for it. It was a heavy token of the Lord's anger, *1 Sam. xiv. 17.* "When the Lord answered not all that day" (when yet he did not speak bitter things against them) because he did use to do it: It notes the anger of the Lord Jesus; I as a man that hath abundance of bread, and yet gives not any, this argues he is very angry if he continue so; and if so, how canst thou sleep under it?

Motive 4. Consider, else the Lord will try you; God hath his trying times, and they were never sent but to discover who were dross, who were gold, and the main end of all God's trials is to discover this truth. What now am I pressing upon you. Some have a thorough work, and now the trial discovers the truth, as in Abraham, *Heb. xi. 17.* Some have superficial work

work, and they fall in trial, as Saul, and it doth discover it was but an overly work: for this is the question God makes: Is it thorough or no? I, saith a carnal heart; yes, saith a gracious heart. Hence it is strange to see what men will do when a trial comes. A man maintains a lust, he will not shew it, nor defend it, he shall turn to be of some opinion or other, and the corruption of his mind shall shew the corruption of his heart: a man loathes the people of God, but he saith he loves them; now this shall be a sign: time shall come that some of them shall be matter of offence to him, and shall not honour him, it shall try him. A man loathes ordinances, he saith he doth not, but comes to the word's end to enjoy them. He shall have plenty of them, and some sad losses with them, and then you shall see he surfeits of them, never quickened by them, to shew the work was but overly. A man's heart is above God, he saith he is content to be at the Lord's disposal, let him do any thing with him, this comforts him. He shall have a cross wife, or something that doth not please him, and now his heart quarrels, and thus he shall be tried, to shew it was but overly work. Men despise the liberties the Lord gives them; they say they prize them. A general governor shall come with pretences of religion and protection, and you shall see this chaff will take old birds now. O therefore try yourselves here, and be sure you fall not short here.

Question. What means are there to be used?

Answer. 1. Look that you make your vessels clear. It hath been said of old, and I believe it is a truth still, that the Lord will never send his Spirit to dwell in an unclean heart. Doves build not their habitations on dunghills. God's Spirit must come as an efficient to take it away, but not as an inhabitant to dwell in an unclean heart, 2 Tim. ii. 19, 20, 21. "He that purgeth himself," he doth not say, God must do all,

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but he under God searcheth and purgeth, he shall "be a vessel of honour," if from these things, especially from those sins which apostates are conquered with, of which he there speaks: For there be many sins a man may be purged from, and not be a vessel of honour. But what are the sins the apostates perish by, mark them, find them out, one by pride, another by sloth, another by the world, &c. "He shall "be a vessel of honour." Men see and confess, but make not work of it indeed, the old heart is not better, you consume and languish still, 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. "I heat not the air," &c. I lay deadly blows upon my enemy, and "I beat down my body, lest," &c. Overly search of sin, hath made overly decay of sin, and hence overly grace and affection. As a man hath not light, nor love, nor esteem enough, because he never felt his wound to the bottom. O account it an inestimable mercy when it is thus; O therefore remember the rule of the prophet, Jer. iv. 3, 4. "Sow not "among thorns," &c. Many men's profession springs up, but withers, never comes to perfection; this ground is not ploughed, or if so, not thoroughly ploughed, but thorns left to choak it. Well saith the Lord, look to yourselves, lest "my wrath break out "like fire;" why is the Lord dreadful here? O because men are careless here, I look to Christ, and my desires are good, and I pray in secret, and I am much changed, &c.

2. Look that your vessel be never kept empty; when a man hath no grace, and sees how others can pray and mourn, and how far short he falls of them, it is easy now to be empty, as Saul when he was no king; but when the Lord hath given some light and affection, and some comfort, and some reformation; now a man grows full here. Saints do for God, and carnal hearts do something likewise; but a little fills them, and quiets them, and so damns them. And hence men at the first work upon them are very diligent

gent in the use of means, but after that they be brought to neglect prayer, sleep out sermons, and to be careless, sapless, liveless, who is the better for them? Because I say that now they have got something, the main work is wrought, they call not that into question, and so when God comes to reckon, they are found too light. O therefore keep the vessel empty, never content thyself with any measure. Hath the Lord called thee? Yes, I think so, and believe sometimes so, but I am afraid I may at last be found without oil in my vessel: be then every day, as if thou wert now to begin. And this I say, true grace as it comforts, so it never fills, but puts an edge on the appetite; more of that grace Lord! Thus, Paul, Phil. iii. 13, 14. Thus David, "Out of my poverty I have given," &c. 1 Chron. xxix. 3, 7, 18.

It is a sure way never to be deceived in lighter strokes of the Spirit to be thankful for any, but to be content with no measure of it, and this cuts the thread of difference between a superficial lighter stroke of the Spirit, and that which is sound.

3. Look that your vessel be not broken, nor cracked, that when the Lord pours in, it runs out again, Heb. ii. 1, 2.—Prov. iv. 12, 13. O here is the wound of many a man, he hath many affections in word, in ordinances, and they take hold on him to convince; to affect him, but he takes not fast hold on them, he keeps them not as his life, with thankfulness for any little, and with watchfulness. And hence a man is where he was, dry and barren. It is true, the Lord will not give that out of an ordinance which he doth in an ordinance. But it is one thing to have it lost out of thy hands and the Lord's hands likewise, another thing only to lose it out of thy hand. It is one thing for the Lord to withdraw it, another thing for thee to spend it away by the prevailing power of a lust, viz. either the world without, or contempt of grace within; you esteem it not as your life, and hence

hence seek not to keep it, you will lose the oil in your vessels. And I am confident this is one reason why a man lives long under means, and never profits, the Lord sees if he should pour any thing into the heart, it would be lost. He takes fast hold of world or self, and keeps that, and hence all runs out again.

4. Look that you be at the cost to get this oil in your vessel. These virgins when the door was shut and too late would, but the time was past. For we shall find the reason why men's works are slight, their buildings, their garments, why, they will not be at the cost; so men's works of grace is slight, because they will not be at the cost. They find a want of grace, and prize it, and would fain have it, but it shall cost them little: they will not be at the cost of their time. Sometime they seek the Lord in an ordinance, but what if he comes not? They depart from him. Sometimes in pangs, and fits when the Spirit comes, they seek, but to be ever seeking, ever carrying sense of sin, it is too much time and trouble, they will not be at the cost. Some affections and hearts they spend, but not their whole hearts: Hence Christ exhorts, O "strive, because many seek and are never able." Look therefore as it was with Jonathan, Saul, 1 Sam. xiv. 45, said, "he should die." No, the people said, "not so, for he hath wrought with God this day." Not that a man can get grace by his own strength, but Col. i. 29. "I strive according to his mighty working." Only let me add this, be at cost first to get the Lord Jesus himself; as Matth. xiii. 33. "He sold all and bought the field;" and when he had the field, now he had the treasure: O think no time too much, no lusts too dear, no affections too much for him (and then you have all things with him, and shall receive life from him) and not for a death, but for a living, risen Christ. Christ bestowed gifts on Judas, on Saul; but whom he bestowed himself upon, those never wanted any
 O o o thing,

thing, Psal. xxiii. 1. But here I might take up a dreadful complaint; O that men content themselves with colours and tinctures of truth and Spirit, &c. Some naturalists observe, that brass would be gold, it tends to it, had it but more heat of the sun to concoct it, and to bring it to perfection; so it is with the lighter strokes of common grace.

CHAP. XXI. SECT. I.

That true saving Grace in the Hearts of Believers can never fail.

Observation 4. **T**HAT those graces of the Spirit wherewith those heavenly vessels or souls of the faithful are filled, are constant, and of an eternal nature.

For thus the wise virgins, their vessels were not only filled, but the oil was constantly preserved in them, and continued in their vessels, until they met the bridegroom. It is true, their lamp went out, outward acts of the Spirit of grace, expressed in the profession of the saints may be extinct for a time, yet the oil did remain in the vessel still, which was not so with those which were foolish, not only their lamps were out, but their oil was spent; so that here is a third difference between "the foolish and the wise virgins:" That Spirit of grace in the one is of a dying, withering nature; in the other, of an eternal and everlasting nature. There is an eternal excellency stamped upon them, John iv. 14. "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him," no pools, but a perpetual living spring. Heb. vi. 9. "Some that were enlightened and tasted, fell away, but we are persuaded better things of you." The saints have better things, which do not cause, but accompany salvation. The Lord is so far from suffering it to die,

as that he will add to it, Luke viii. 18. "To him that hath shall be given." Though it be like mustard seed, yet it shall grow: there is a growing virtue in it. But as the Lord speaks of his people, Isa. lxxv. 8, "As new wine is in the cluster, and one saith, 'destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so it shall be here.'" Nay, though it be not so much as seen, yet the Lord then can see it, and doth then keep it, and will preserve it, Isa. xl. 29, 30, 31. Nay, though opposed and resisted by temptation, yet, 1 Peter i. 6, 7. It is not consumed, but tried, that it may be to glory another day, notwithstanding manifold temptations. It is one of the greatest miracles in the world to preserve it, as a spark of fire in a sea of water: Nay, though it seems to a man's feeling to be quite quenched and put out, that a man finds no more than a reprobate, yet the seed of God remains, and it will break out again. There is life at the heart and sap at the root, yet the Lord will bring them again. When the Lord of glory was crucified, and all the disciples fled, not one spake for him, none durst confess him, yet the Lord returns to them, and they again to him.

S E C T. II.

Question. *How comes it to be thus immortal and of an eternal nature?*

Answer 1. It is not only in regard of the power of grace received, though it were perfect; for then Adam had not fell from it.

2. Nor in the freedom of a man from temptation; for then the angels had not fallen.

3. Nor yet in the power of a man's own watchfulness and care to keep it. For "if the Lord keep not the city, the watchmen wake but in vain."

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4. Nor

4. Nor yet in the power of any means ; as many think, if under a powerful ministry, then they are out of danger. It is not in Paul, nor Apollos, but in the Lord. Men may rejoice in John's ministry, and be affected with it, but it is only for a season. But,

I. In regard of the eternal election and purpose of God. Their constancy in the state of grace depends upon that immutability of his counsel, Matth. xxiv. 24. "They shall deceive, if possible, the elect;" but it is not possible, they being elect. Wise men may have their brains crazed, and Nebuchadnezzar like, the use of reason gone, but the principle of reason continues, and the use of it in time returns again; and so it is in regard of damning delusions, 1 Tim. ii. 19. "Hymeneus and Philetus fell;" hence do not the elect fall? No, for that foundation remains sure. 1. The certainty of their continuance in grace is built upon a foundation. 2. Not a very weak one, but a firm foundation. 3. Not a foundation of man's laying, but God's. 4. Not a wavering and tottering, but standing foundation, and that sealed with the knowledge of God, "The Lord knows who are his," i. e. though some men fall, that one cannot tell by outward expressions and profession who are the Lord's, yet "The Lord knows who are his," and they are sealed by his love and knowledge. And it seems this is the prime cause of the continuance of angels, 1 Tim. v. 21. And election being free, for his own sake, not for their sakes, the Lord foresaw all their good and evil; hence they are not cut off.

II. In regard of the faithfulness and promise and covenant of God's grace. Adam had that covenant: if he did do, he should live: But he had no absolute promise he should do, or continue to do; but the faithful have; and hence they stand, not by the strength of grace, but by the strength of the covenant of grace. And

And hence that which to reason is incredible, to nature impossible, is brought about by faith; not by virtue, of any power of a promise. God hath said it, and faith believes it; and hence Abraham's dead body begets, and Sarah's barren womb brings forth Isaac. Hence through all the word, when the apostle perswades himself of their continuance, he ever puts in God's faithfulness, 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. 1 Thes. v. xxiv. 2 Thes. iiii. 3. Hence Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will not turn away from them." *Answer.* True, if they do not from the Lord. No, but they shall not turn away from me. *Objection.* But we see many do fall. *Answer.* But if he doth, he shall not be broken, but taken up again, Psal. xxxvii. 24. Yea for a time the Lord may do thus. But will this continue, having sinned against such mercy, and my sin being now greater? Now the Lord will depart. *Answer.* 1 Cor. i. 8. "Yea, he will confirm you to the end." Yes, it may be he will, as he hath done, while I am out of temptation: But I may meet with it before I die. *Answer.* 1 Cor. x. 13. "He will not suffer you to be tempted above measure," &c. Yea, if I was such a one as Abraham or David, that had such hearts, and did the Lord so much honour. Nay, but Isa. lv. 3. "even the sure mercies of David." This is the faithfulness of God.

III. In regard of the constant abode of the Spirit of the Lord in the hearts of the saints, whereby they are kept, John x. 28. "None can pull his sheep out of the Father's hand." Look as the first Adam sinning, conveys the power of sin and Satan, and death, which reigns with unconquerable power over all the sons of men; so Christ rising, conveys that grace and constant presence of the Spirit which reigns to eternal life, and carries the soul through all difficulties, Deut. xxxiii. 27. "The eternal God is thy refuge." Let what evils can come, there is a refuge. Yea, so long as I can stand. But what if I fall?

fall? "Underneath are the everlasting arms." Let a saint fall never so low, yet God's everlasting arms are still lower; wherever he falls, he falls at last into the Lord's arms; for else it was impossible for any soul to continue, Isa. xlv. 3, 4. "From the womb "to the hoary head I will carry you." Saints when they are little, think they shall fall at last, and when strengthened, fear if they live till old age, their hearts and spirits will die; yet they do not. But how comes this about? "I will carry you." And hence it is impossible they should ever die or perish, no more than the Lord Jesus, John xiv. 19. So that if God's purpose is firm, his promise sure, his Spirit able, the Spirit of life and grace in the hearts of the faithful, shall be kept even to eternity.

S E C T. III.

Use. LET that opinion, that the graces of saints are fading and mortal, rot and die, and be had in everlasting detestation of them that know the Lord.

Object. But we see how many fall off and fall back, and I have found it by experience so.

Ans. The seed that is cast into the earth, first dies, and then lives and grows; so no sooner doth the Lord fill his saints, but there is much self-confidence in it, and resting in it, hence it dies, yet it lives and grows again. And hence the Lord keeps his people poor, and sensible of their own weakness as long as they live; but if it quite dies and withers, they were never the Lord's, nor never had one drachm of grace, 1 John ii. 19. If it be taken away, he did but seem to have it. All fleshly excellencies in men, as common gifts be, do wither, Isa. xl. 6, 7. "All flesh is "grass." But plants in God's orchard never lose their greenness, though plants and flowers in the field may, Psal. i. 3. "Whose leaf shall not wither."

Objection.

Objection But this may make men secure, say the Arminians.

Answer 1. Nothing puts more life in the saints. It would sink them else, if it were not thus, as when the Lord told Joshua, "wherever thou settest thy foot; thou shalt prosper, not a man able to stand against thee;" this puts life into him.

2. Though they cannot fall quite away, yet they may fall so as to lose the sweetness of grace, and presence of God. If a man should eat too much, and ever be sick, though not die after it; or if one should fall and break his bones, though he doth not lose his life: Is this any hope for any to rejoice?

3. Though they cannot wholly drive away nor beat out the breath of the Spirit, yet they may "grieve the Spirit by which they are sealed," Eph. iv. 30. Which is more sad to a holy heart than all evils in the world beside. But therefore let this conceit die and perish, which is raised up by Satan to disgrace the image of God and Spirit of grace in the hearts of the faithful; for who will make men seek after perishing things, under a colour of making men seek for the Spirit? It is to resist and quench the Spirit of God in them.

S E C T. IV.

Use 2. **IT** may comfort the hearts of the faithful exceedingly against fears of apostacy, when they see great cedars fall, how shall I stand? And when they hear of some temptation that may be hereafter, then they fear. And when they feel the evil of their own hearts (which the Lord lets them feel to humble them that they may grow lower, and so stand the faster) they say, I shall fall, and when they have found the Lord's presence, O if now I should relapse after this health!

Quest.

Quest. How shall I know whether I shall stand or no?

Ans. It is not discernable by perseverance, but by somewhat begun, though very difficult to be seen.

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1. Observe God's several and various dispensations of himself and his grace toward thee, whether they issue from his everlasting love or no; for if so, then he will everlastingly keep that which he hath given thee.

Quest. How shall I know that?

Ans. Look as that issues from eternal wrath, that separates the soul from God, or therein it is exprest; so that is the expression of eternal love which draws thee to God in Jesus Christ. Observe therefore the Lord's carriage, doth it draw thee at last to him, nearer to him; and so the more he dispenseth of himself, the nearer thou art brought to him; here is the expression of eternal love, and the Lord will keep thee, John vi. 37. "All that are given me shall come to me." Let the Lord give his Spirit, though but little, they grow thankful. O he is come, whom I thought would never have returned again! Let him deny it, this keeps them humble. Let the Lord dispense himself in an ordinance, they love him; and "one day here, better than a thousand elsewhere." Let him not do so, they feel the more need of him. Let the Lord free them from temptations, and give them conquest, faith now rejoiceth. Let them fall into many temptations, their faith grows the more purified than ever. Let the Lord give them outward blessings, they grow more vile in their own eyes, "less than the least," with Jacob. Let the Lord deny them, Hab. iii. 18. they rejoice in the Lord. They get good and are more endeared to the Lord, by every carriage of the Lord's, at least in the issue it is so. As it is with wicked men, they may for a fit be affected and return to the Lord, but in the issue they forget the Lord, so it is here contrariwise.

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There is not any unregenerate man, but something or other consumes him. The wicked ever are like chaff driven from God. Gold that is of an everlasting nature, keep it, beat it, burn it, you cannot consume, but only purify it; it is not so with chaff. Let the Lord give him tastes of grace and joy, it estrangeth his soul from Christ, it doth not bring him near to Christ.

2. Observe whether thou dost grow out of, and live upon an everlasting covenant or no, Rom. xi. 1. "God hath not cast off his people, whom he fore-knew." Who are those? "Children of the promise," Rom. ix. 7, 8. That are born and bred of the promise or whole covenant of grace; God hath treasured up all grace in Christ, laid it up in that store-house; Christ hath dropped it in his promises. Now when the soul is rooted in the covenant, now it shall never die nor perish. As it is with some trees, set them in the ground, they will grow, if they have sun and rain, but die at last: take another, and set it in a stock, so that it abides there, and fetcheth all its life from thence by cleaving to it; now it will grow and become a flourishing branch. Now when the soul grows out of the covenant, for the whole benefit of it, and is fully satisfied with it, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, 5. As take a soul that feels a want of all the benefits of the covenant, pardon, peace, life, that the Spirit is ready oft to fail, and hath no assurance it shall have any part of that which is the childrens portion; and looks upon his own unworthiness, never to have any from the Lord, yet it looks up to the free mercy and grace that made it to some, to make it good to me, and so pleads the promise, and so lays itself there, and there rests, and there looks, and here sucks, and takes root, and the root spreads to every part of the covenant. The Lord hath now rooted the soul in this covenant, and it hath received life from hence, this is everlasting, you shall continue. And when the soul especially is like a

bough blown by the wind, yet it stands fast still. If men have been in horrors, and then fell to reformation, and there rested, it will not last. If men have had some workings and actings of the Spirit upon them, and then say, God must do all, but they grow not into the covenant, they will die; but here though God keeps thee short and naked, and thou only pleadest the covenant, thou shalt stand. If you plead for pardon, and some good, not the whole good of the covenant, you shall die also. If you grow upon some distemper, and the whole heart grow not upon this, you will die also. Look as it is with a man that builds, he will make an end if the foundation be laid, but if not, pull it down, so here.

3. If the power of grace received and acted by the Spirit, hath risen to the nature of fruits, and not leaves only, John xv. 2. And that is, when the soul receives that grace, as that in every thing its scope is to live to God, to give his heart content. For fruit is the end of the tree's growth, and leaves and fruit is not for the tree, but for the content of the owner of it. If so the Lord hath undertaken to purge thee, though there be much self-seeking in thee, and he hath undertaken though little at present, to make thee bear more fruit. Many a man hath much affection and grace, but when he hath it, what is it but leaves to adorn and beautify himself? But he lives not to the Lord; another man will live to the Lord in what he does, the Lord is so dear, and himself so vile, as that he doth thus.

4. If you pray for it in Christ's name. *Object.* Many pray. *Ans.* But when Christ and you pray together, you will speed; and then Christ prays when his Spirit cries at the throne of mercy, then himself is at the throne of Justice. And his Spirit cries; 1. Not for an unfit person, that hath some slight change, but for his saints, whose hearts are endeared to him and his whole will. 2. Not for an evil or private end, but the Lord's. 3. Not coldly, but with groans unutterable

utterable. Is it thus with thee? O then how canst thou fall! Dost thou fear satan? Mat. xvi. 18. he shall not prevail against thee, but thou shalt give the last blow and wound. Dost thou fear the world, the deceits of it? Mat. xxiv. 24. "(if possible the elect)" Dost thou fear the evil or good things of it? John xviii. 13. "though in the world, yet Christ prays you "may be delivered from the evil of it." Dost thou fear thy sin, that will separate? *Ans.* Rom. vi. 2. "How can we that are dead live any longer therein?" It is a strong, but a wounded, but a dying enemy. Dost thou fear the Lord, thou hast walked so unworthy of him? "He will not break the bruised reed till "judgment come to victory," though little, though weak. O therefore be comforted against this in these times, which are apostatical, declining, evil days, and bless the Lord!

S E C T. V.

Use 3. **HENCE** we learn what verdict to pass and give in concerning those men that decay and fall off from the Lord. They never had oil in their vessel, never had a dram of grace in their heart: Thus, 1 John ii. 19. "If they had been of us, they would "doubtless have continued with us." It seems they were such men which were so eminent and excellent, as that there were no brands nor marks upon them to give notice to the churches that they were marked out for apostacy, but were only discovered to be un-found by their apostacy; and this was argument good enough. Hence Christ, when some of the Jews began to believe in him with a temporary faith, John viii. 31. "If my word continue in you, ye are my "disciples," as if he should say, your faith is a fancy, if it continue not. Look therefore as the prophet said, Zach. i. 5. "Your prophets, where are they? Your "fathers, where are they?" So say I to you, your

tears, your tenderness, your groanings, your heart-breaking prayers, &c. where are they? Is it with them as with ships that are sunk and wrecked, some of the ribs remain, which gives you to see and say, there was a fair ship, but it is sunk? 1 Tim. i. 19. "Make shipwreck of conscience," and so lose their faith also. Some men for a time seem to keep a whole conscience, wind and water-tide, they can pass through many storms, yet at last it breaks, and when that is lost, their faith is lost also. Their faith before God, and conscience before men, both of them break.

Now there are two sorts of apostates: 1. Open in mens life, whose falls are like the falls of a mighty tree, it falls with noise, and breaks down all the under-wood: So their falls make a noise in all the country where they lived, and by their falls some are saddened, others offended and damned. 2. Secret, when men are apostates in heart, Prov. xiv. 14. which have chosen some sinful ways, Jer. iii. When it is with men as it was with Saul, there is no commendation of him but this, that he was higher by the head and shoulders than any of Israel: So it is with these, in outward profession higher than others, but their oil is spent.

Object. But do not many of the saints fall openly and secretly?

Ans. True, they may and do fall exceeding greatly. But as Moses prophesying of the apostacy of Israel after his death, Deut. xxxii. 29. yet it is said, it is not "the corruption, nor spot of his children." Deut. xxxii. 5. There is a great difference between an hypocrite's apostacy from his grace, and saints from theirs. It is one thing to fall from branch and root too, another thing only for the branches to be broken off and the root not pulled up, Jude 12. There are some apostacies that argue there was never a dram of grace in that soul. Saints fall down, but do not fall

fall away: and of such apostacies as argue want of grace, take the following discoveries.

1. When a man's rising is the cause of his fall (or seals a man up in his fall) or at least the cause, through his corruption, *Ex. gr.* Time was a man lived a loose, careless, carnal life; by the ministry of some word, or reading of some book, or speaking with some friend, he comes to be convinced of his misery and woeful condition, and sees no good, nor grace in himself, he hath been even hitherto deceived; at last he comes to get some light, some taste, some sorrows, some heart to use the means, some comfort, and mercy, and hope of life: and when it is thus with him now he falls, he grows full and falls, and this rising is the cause of his fall, his light is darkness, and death to him, and grows to a form of knowledge: his rising makes him fall to formality, and then to prophane-ness, and so his tasting satisfies him, his sorrows empty his heart of sorrow for sin, and his sorrows for his falls harden his heart in his falls, and all the means of recovering him harden him; that now if men never had had means, even Sodom, they would have relented before now. This is a sad token of falling away, and having had only lighter work, it being a plain evidence that at their best they were filled with their lusts, because a little light and affection satisfied them, which is now turned by the power of their lust to harden them, Isa. vi. 9. This is given as one sure sign of a people forsaken of God, when "in seeing they see not, and they hearing hear not." Look as it is in diseases, if the physic and meat turns to be poison, then there is no hope of recovery, a man is sick to death now. The saints little measure makes them forget what is behind, Prov. iv. 18, He shines "bright-er and brighter till perfect day." So that let him fall he cannot be quiet there; but when he remembers from whom he is fallen, if once he tasted the Lord, this will fetch him again, and make him rest-
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less till he return. But if it be so as now it is with these, then the case is woful, when there is such a plague on men and they know it not.

When a man saith to himself, as the glutton said to his soul, "Take thy rest, for thou hast goods laid up for many years;" so thou hast repentance, and grace, and peace enough for many years, and hence the soul takes its rest, grows sluggish and negligent, O if you die in this case, this night thy soul shall be taken away to hell.

2. If when men fall from the Lord, and they rise up only in ordinances, but fall down constantly out of ordinances without feeling. A carnal heart falls, but he thinks himself is not therefore without all grace, because in an ordinance his heart sometimes is affected, so they were, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. The prophet's ministry was sweet to them, "but their hearts went after their covetousness," their hogs, their houses, their lusts, their lots; and they joy in the prophet, but never mourn for that. A precious heart also falls out of ordinances, but he feels his falls: Though he falls from the benefit of his rising, yet not from the feeling of his fall. But to another man the sweet he finds in ordinances, is but music to his meat, Mat. vii. 26. 27. "He that heareth my words and doth them not, that man's house is built upon sand, which falls," and the cause of great falls is this: Look as it is with corn ground, if rain falls upon that, though it be long before any ripe fruit comes; yet it makes it at last come to some ripeness: But if it falls on other ground, seed is sown there, but it brings forth briars, though it drinks in rain, it is nigh to cursing, Heb. vi. 7, 8. Look as it was with Saul, "God had forsaken him," 1 Sam. xvi. 14. 23. and a spirit of satan came upon him, yet when David played with his harp, it stilled the spirit in him, and affected him much; it did not cast out the spirit, for when he had done playing, "the evil spirit came a-
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"gain upon him." So it is at this day, a man is forsaken of the Spirit of God, and haunted with an evil spirit of pride, world, passion, lust, libertinism; a man prays, hears, and is made much better; it is stilled, not cast out; for after this a man returns to his old spirit again, and in time he cannot be quieted with preaching, nor praying, no more than he could with harping.

3. When a man is so fallen, as that he returns not in the season of rising: Look as it is with trees in the winter, their leaves, their blossoms, their fruit, their beauty is gone: Is it then dry, and barren, and quite withered and cursed? One would think so for the present, but it is not so, because the season of fruit and leaves is not now; if in spring and summer it should be so, then you might well suspect it. Thus Jer. viii. 5, 7, 8. yet they said they were wise, and they had law and ordinances among them: True, yet they did not know their season, hence fell with an everlasting backsliding. Hence Psa. i. 3, 4, 5. "They are like the tree planted by the river's side, which bears in season."

Quest. What, and when is this season?

Ans. I cannot tell you the season of every man, but I will shew you the usual seasons of many men.

1. When Jesus Christ the Sun of Righteousness draws exceeding near unto the soul, and that to the reviving of others, Isa. lv. 6. but thy heart never a whit the better, nor yet much troubled it is so bad. When Peter falls, a look recovers him; when Ephesus falls from her first love, to "remember from whence she is fallen," is enough to restore her to her love again. When the disciples fell after Christ's death, yet when he arose and opened the scripture, their hearts burned within them. But thou hast had Jesus Christ opening the riches of his grace from heaven, and thou hast heard a voice, but not seen the sight, the glory of the Lord in this thy day; and this
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thou hast done though the sun hath come to his full height sometime: This is thy season; gospel, and Christ, and promises, are grown common to you, &c. As it was with the possessed man, Mat. xvii. 15. "The devil takes him oft, and casts him into the water and fire;" but if when he comes to Christ he has no help, the Lord be merciful to him then: So you have been possessed and fallen, but when the Lord Jesus comes he casts them out; but if the Lord speaks, enlightens, and cometh, saying, Remember me whom thou hast abused, my wet look, my watery eyes, and my sorrowful heart which thou hast broken, here is all my love, and this prevails not, but thou neither risest nor desirest the Lord to raise thee: This is sad. In the day of jubilee, be a servant then for ever, if your old master still pleaseth you; especially when all means are used; when the last of a course of physic is taken, and is ineffectual.

2. When the Lord is ready to depart from the soul. Sometimes saints do not melt at love, but the Lord departs, now this recovers them. As a man that hath a friend, though they grow weary of their company, and they begin to carry away divers things, yet when they come to take their leave indeed, now they recover, and they cannot part now. Like Joseph and his brethren, they can neither of them part. Nicodemus and Joseph cannot contain, but cleave to Christ, when most forsaken. David, when God "hides his face, is troubled," Psa. xxx. 7. It is with saints as with sick folk, when their sickness and sores come to their height, now they break and recover, Hos. v. 15. But if God's departing from thee makes thee more vile, it makes thee apostatize from him; it is certain thou hadst never life then. This is a Saul's brand, 1 Sam. xxviii. He forsakes the Lord and goes to a witch. Never saw you yet a gracious heart, but the Lord made extremity fetch him in. And no surer sign of an ungracious heart, than to have

have this blast him and drive him from the Lord, Mal. iii. 14. A man hath God's ordinances, he finds no profit, no God, no Christ, his affection is lost, and now he forsakes the Lord. O when Christ is a rock of offence, wo, wo to that soul! Now thou hast neither summer nor winter fruit. O look to thy fall here!

4. When men so fall from the Lord, as that their whole hearts make choice of, and are espoused to some lust, wedded to some distemper. For though the saints may fall, yet never to another lover; for they cannot fall into any sin that breaks covenant between them and the Lord, Hof. ii. 19. When men make choice of any thing in the world to take content in more than in the Lord, or together with the Lord, and hence defend it as lawful, and are fully free in it; there was never grace there. For if any thing doth give the saints content, it is not their choice, but refusing: but you are wedded to your lust. David could say, "I have chosen thy testimonies, O forsake me not utterly!" Others chuse somewhat else, not thee, Psa. cxxv. 5. "Those that walk in crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth." This is given as a black mark of men that are broken off from the Lord, Rom. xi. 9. "Let their table become a snare." When it may be no unlawful thing, but lawful is that which banes them, 2 Pet. ii. 22. Sheep may fall into the mire, but if they lie and wallow in it, it is a swine; and all their excellencies are but pearls in a swine's snout.

Quest. But when doth a man make choice of it?

Ans. 1. When a man's heart is set upon a lust, and God blesteth and prospers him in it. When God fills the "backslider in heart full of his own ways." His heart is worldly, and he thrives in it; his heart is ambitious, and he hath his honour. This the Lord gives not to his people, but some rod or other upon their backs, Hof. iv. 17. "Let him alone."

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2. When a man lies long in his fall. Saints lie not long : I limit no time, but when day after day a man lives in it, Rom. xi. 10. " Let their backs be bowed down alway." O when a man's heart and back is bowed down alway, saints are under Christ's care.

3. When the cause of a man's withering is a withering root. Trees in winter cast their leaves as withered trees, but others root is hurt. If the branches do wither, yet if the root remain, it will recover again. So the saints cast their leaf, and their branches wither in desertions and temptations, but they preserve themselves at the root. But why do others wither. It is because their faith withers, Heb. x. 39. and iii. 12, 14. Many a man withers because of his faith. He feels many wants. Why lives he so? Why dies he in beggary? Why see, Mic. iii. 11. When a man " is twice dead and pulled up by the roots," so that the root perisheth ; " for him is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." That the means and way of enriching saints is a way of beggary, to these it is very fatal. There is some false faith in saints, but it is not wholly such.

O consider these things ! No grace ; what no grace ? I say then no life, no God, no spirit, no Christ, no glory. O mourn here ! See it now, that you may be humbled, and so saved. Else you will fall worse and worse still, Jer. iii. 5, 6.

S E C T. VI.

Use 4. **HENCE** see how far they fall short of saving grace, that serve the Lord by fits and starts, and whose hearts follow after the Lord, and make much of the Lord only in good moods. Dying pangs are not eternal graces ; withering grace is flourishing and prosperous wickedness. If the spirit of grace in the saints be of an eternal, constant nature ; that is not the spirit of grace which accompanies salvation, which

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is alive to day, but dead to-morrow, which a man is full of to day, but quite empty of to-morrow. Hence the prophet cries out, Hof. vi. 4, 5. "O Ephraim what shall I do?" What more means can I use for thy good? Why, do we not get good by means? Yes, but "thy goodness is like the morning dew," soon lickt up by the sun; "and like a cloud which passeth away," which promiseth much, but is scattered again. The Lord knows not what to do with such men; yet how many be of such, that like Jonah's gourd, spring up for a time, and then die the next day, and they comfort themselves under the shadow thereof. That take them in their mood they are as good as you can wish, more than men; but out of it they are brute beasts, not men. Whatever is in a godly man, the likeness and similitude of it is for a time in an hypocrite. Would you have earnest prayer for a blessing? look upon Esau, he "seeks for it with tears," and mourns for it for a time. Would you have following the means, and that the most powerful and searching, and joy in it also? See John v. 35. "What went they out into the wilderness to see? a prophet," a burning and shining light, and rejoiced therein for a season. Would you have hazarding life for Paul and ministry of the gospel? Alexander did thus for a time. Would you have people enter into covenant with God? Look upon the Israelites, Deut. xxix. with xxxi. 16. "I know that after thy death this people will go awhoring." Would you have thankfulness? Psa. cvi. 13. "They sang his praise, they soon forgot the Lord." And these affections are for a time stronger than the saints, like land floods; and because they be violeut and strong, they last not long, but however, it argues a wretched false heart, Psa. lxxviii. 37. "Their hearts were not right," because "not stedfast in his covenant."

Object. But what man is there but changeth? What body so healthful, that is found alway in the

same temper? Do not the saints find their hearts soon cold, their joy soon quenched, their affections soon spent? This therefore will discourage them.

Ans. I answer in two ways,

First, They sometimes deny the constancy of grace, where constantly it is, (for the spirit of grace in us is like life, for it is eternal life. It is ever acting or remaining in the soul) and this they do by reason of many mistakes. As

1. They think the grace of God in them perisheth, when the act ceaseth. Whereas a man may be weary of actions of life, where life remaineth, as in sick men. A man may have a rich treasure always with him, yet not always spend it. There is a gracious frame of heart which the Lord regards chiefly, which is before the act, and hence may be without it. The wheel doth not run that it may be round, but it is made round that it may run. Hence when the act of running ceaseth, the frame whereby it is fit to run again, remaineth, and this is "the seed of God." 1 John iii. 9.

2. Many think the act of grace ceaseth, when it doth not act always upon the same object; as some think, because they have not the sense of God's love always, all grace is lost, when it may be there is sense of corruption at that time, sometime God gives victory over temptation, it riseth again: Now the soul thinks the very act of grace ceaseth, when yet is now warring against the temptation; sometime the spirit of grace may lead a man to prayer and sadness, sometime to a man's calling and cheerfulness. The act of grace is small, its dominion large.

3. They think they are not constant, when they are not so at all times as they are at some times: As a man thinks he is inconstant at prayer, because he is not all day upon his knees; not heavenly minded, because he is not all day long minding heavenly things: Whereas the spirit should be ready so to do and be at all times, and in every world-ly

ly occasion to be sowing and reaping some spiritual good; yet it is not a seasonal way to be upon the mount. Sometimes Moses must not come down to the camp. God requires every fit season for his special worship, not every particle of time.

4. Many think the power of grace is ceased and taken away, when some special enlargements are: As a Christian shall find at sometimes; having special work to do, special miseries to go through, he hath special enlargements of the spirit of joy, courage, boldness with God, love and zeal. These lasting not, he thinks all is gone now. But look as it was with Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv. 8. Then "he alone and his "armour-bearer went against an host," yet 1 Sam. xvii. 11. against Goliath not a word. Paul to his death was a faithful and able minister of the gospel, though sometimes his mouth stopped, and his heart straitened: The ship may be going to the harbour, though sometime greater, sometime lesser winds.

Secondly, But yet I confess there is much changeableness in the saints, and unevenness in their course, and their spirits are apt to grow weary and faint, otherwise they had no need to be exhorted not to be weary, and when they are lifted up, they soon sink down, Heb. xii. 1. And hence question, Was there ever grace in this heart? But yet there is much difference between the inconstancy of the one and of the other, in three things:

1. An hypocrite's affections when they cease, they are raised again by some external principles and motives; but the faithful when they have lost what they had, they recover it again by a new nature, an inward principle; which is an evidence there was the being of grace all this while. Empty a pond, it will never fill again till the clouds above it pour down rain. Empty a spring, though it sees no clouds in the heavens, yet it runs of itself, and will fill itself again. So when a hypocrite is left dry and empty, if some clouds

clouds of displeasure, fears of death and hell come, he is filled ; but a child of God when no fear of death or hell, yet many times something within begins to work, as in David, Psa. xxxix. 3. " While musing, " the fire kindled," the sense of sin, to lie out from God, to quench his spirit, the beauty of grace, the command of God, the honour of the Lord Jesus recovers him, Heb. viii. 10. Deut. v. 29. They spake as largely as any could desire, yet their hearts were naught, because this came from no inward principle, but only from external fear. " When the priest's " feet touch Jordan, the waters stood on heaps ;" but " when they are passed through, they overflow all " the banks" again, according to their nature. So when the word is preached powerfully, and the gospel with authority, and the priests feet touch men's consciences, and they come to make way for the ark, for the Lord, men in fits fall down before the Lord against their natures ; and for a Sabbath day men are as full of good purposes and hearts as may be, yet perish at last, John viii. 30. 31. " Many believed " when they heard his word ;" but then are you my " disciples if you continue." All hypocrites pangs come from external principles ; and hence take them away their affections die. Sometimes the novelty of a thing affects a man ; the sight of shore is beautiful ; at last when manna proves daily bread, it is loathed. At first ministers feet are beautiful, they would pull out their right eyes for Paul, yet afterward cast him off. A Pharaoh in thunder and fear of death, cries, " Take away the plague." A man in affliction promiseth much ; when it is past, his care to find out his sin, his seeking to be purged from his sin ceaseth. Joash is good while Jehojada lives. A man is good in quickening company, but " when iniquity abounds, " his love waxeth cold ;" whereas when these fail, a holy heart grows better. That which makes the one to fall, makes the other to fear, and so to stand. A

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conceit carries a man on, but when his conceit is gone, he falls. Look as it is with dead men, they may have heat and colour, but it is from the fire; a living man may be cold, and his beauty gone, yet he comes to be hot again, not from external heat, but internal life within: He can get himself heat, as we say, so it is here. Or as it is with the clock and the sun, the one moves by art, the other by nature.

2. Suppose there be some inward spirit to raise affections, yet these graces arise in them without the destruction of the contrary corruption. And so are like to Moses' burning bush, "the bush burning, but yet not burnt." And thus it was with Balaam, "suddenly the Spirit of God came upon him, and he saw the beauty of Jacob's tent, and blessed them" above all people in the world, yet his covetous, malicious heart against them was not consumed: We never read of Balaam's mourning for want of the sight of their glory, and of love to their persons and posterity; but the graces of the saints do arise from the dying of the contrary lust or corruption, yet the being of it remains in full power, though not in the exercise thereof, because it is in such a subject where corruption is dying, not living; falling, not reigning. Christ dies, and so lives in his people; where Christ is indeed, there we are first buried with Christ, before we are raised by him. Paul could do great things for Christ, yet sometimes is weak, because his strength arose from the sense of his own insufficiency to think a good thought. The saints see great things, but it is in such a way, as that they "that see not, might see," John ix. 39. Paul is sometimes set at liberty from pricking temptations, yet he hath them sometimes that he may feel them, and so be raised again. Hence many people suddenly find they love the people of God, and love the Lord, but never felt the contrary sin; suspect it is but a pang, as Capernaum was much affected, yet repented not.

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3. The continuance of the risings of a saint are life to him ; they are his life ; his coolings and declining, and decaying, death : But *e. contra* to an hypocrite, the continuance of his affections in ordinances are deaths and burdens to him, the loss of them his liberty and life, wherein he allows himself.

As for example, take an hypocrite to prayer, he is affected for a time, but let him be long at it, he is like a fish in a fever fit out of the water, Mal. i. 13. So for sanctifying the sabbath, and being very strict, but stay long here it is death, it is burdensome to him ; and hence we shall see his decays are his life, and that which makes him walk loosely is, sometimes he repents and believes, and hath his canonical set hours of prayer, and he thinks this is enough, and pleaseth himself with this (who is constant ?) But now take a child of God when his heart is enlarged for the Lord, that is heaven ; it is his food, and now he is in health, as Paul said, 1 Thes. iii. 7, 8. " Now we live, if you continue stedfast : " So for others, so also with himself, Prov. iv. 22. and if it might be ever thus, then happy ; and the thought of this sweetens heaven ; but take away these, it is his death ; and hence he groans to God for the removal of it, Psal. cxix. 4, 5. What good doth Christ, mercies, ordinances, heaven do me with such a heart ? Be not discouraged you people of the Lord, nor encouraged you that are good only in your moods, as the wind turns you ; whatever love you have, it is whorish, and whorish tears, if you follow the Lord, and yet have your haunts, whatever service you do it is odious to God, to work all day for another master, and twice a day come to the Lord for bread. Do you think the Lord likes this, to taste of his grace, and make a meal of your lusts ?

S E C T. VII.

Use 5. of Exhortation. FIRST, to them that are fallen to begin again, if God would but give you ears to hear, who (like strange eggs) being put into the same nest where honest men have lived, there you have been hacht up, and when you were young, there you kept your nest, and lived by crying and opening your mouth wide after the Lord, and the food of his word. But now your wings are grown, you have got some affections, some knowledge, some hope of mercy, and are hardened thereby to fly from God. Can that man be good whom God's grace makes worse? And that flies from God's ordinances, and people, and private prayer? Consider what thou hast done.

1. You bring an ill report and name upon God, Jer. ii. v. "What iniquity have you found in me." If a country be well reported of, it is no matter if some others bring an ill name on it. Wise men will not believe them: But for the searchers of Canaan to bring an ill report of Canaan, this is sad.

2. Thou hast lost all thy prayers, all thy profession, nay better never to have "known these ways," 2 Pet. ii. 21. than to forsake the Lord.

3. No men's misery is so great, Jude xiii. 14. "the blackness of darkness is for such." Search yourselves, you may secretly depart, when you are turning to the Lord, as a snail round about the wheel, the wheel moves it, but it moves a contrary motion of its own from the wheel: Therefore begin again. O but will the Lord receive me? Who knows but he may? And "heal your backslidings," Hof. xiv. Because fallen, return: I know not how. *Ans.* Take words. But the Lord may not regard us. "You shall grow like the lilly, and be as firm as Lebanon." non.

Exhortation 2. "Let them that stand, take heed lest they fall," and you discover your hypocrisy to

all the world, or be like the hypocrites, whose beauty soon fades. And here let me commend three things to you.

1. Take heed that there be not found in your hearts "a root of bitterness to grow up and choak you." Heb. xii. 15. If your house be left empty, and yet one living lust left in it, seven devils will enter again, "and your latter end will be worse than your beginning." You do not know what hearts you have. "Am I a dog," saith Hazael, ever to fall so? Let there be a lust after any creature, you will find the spirit of prayer die; then to think them too long in the word, then to forsake the assemblies of saints, then when your lust is met with to oppose men, ministers, &c. One reigning lust will bring all into captivity to itself, it will slay some, and make others serviceable to defend itself, Psa. cvi. 14, 15.

2. Take heed of taking on you the profession of a Christian course without finding the rest, peace, joy, sweetness of such a course, Prov. ii. 10, 11. There is a satisfying pleasantness in promises, commands, ordinances, you will never hold out else: for wherever the heart finds rest, there it will abide, and for want of that it dies. As in creatures, if it had rest there, the soul would not be unquiet; if in God, it would never go to the creature. Some sweetness you may find, but look to find full rest; as men do find some sweetness in creatures, and so in ordinances; yet being used to them, they grow weary of them because they find no God there, "no fulness of rest," Heb. iv. 11. 12. and go through all the world you shall never have it: Get all the terrors of devils upon you, you will never stand by that; consider therefore as it is in sin, there is the act, and there is the pleasure, so in every ordinance and duty there is both. All apostasy is from this, ordinances are too burthensome unto men to be held unto.

3. Take heed you neglect not private prayer, build
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your houses fit for that purpose, though you sell some of your clothes ; you will for your swine to lie in, and will you not to meet God in ? one hour's meeting the Lord in private will quit your cost : And pray for this, do it lest you do it in the woods, and deserts, and dens of the earth : So much strangeness from God, so much apostacy ; pray that you may hold out in this hour of temptation, that you may with David, not " be forsaken, when grey-headed."

Thus you see now the particular difference between wise and foolish virgins, and what is the ground of the acceptance of the one, and not of the other ? What then will be said ? Can it be, That there are no graces in saints : Or, That there is no difference between the one, and the other ?

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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